A TROVE OF GOLDEN AGE TREASURES

The GOLDEN AGE of COMICS

NMP #2

$2.95
3.50
canada

SPECIAL WILL EISNER SECTION!

INTERVIEW, PANEL, AND COMPLETE SPIRIT STORY

INSIDE: "THE MASK OF FU MANCHU"
A COMPLETE 25 PAGE WALLY WOOD
GOLDEN AGE CLASSIC [A COMPLETE STORY]
PLUS: A FIGHTING YANK ADVENTURE

For dealer information, contact:

Capital City Dist.
[Contact : Milton Griepp]
2827 Perry St.
Madison, Wi. 53713

Diamond Comic Dist.
[Contact : Bill Krutchick]
2226 East Bay Dr.
Largo, Fl. 33541

Glenwood Dist.
[Contact : Russ Ernst]
124 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, Il. 62234

Pacific Comics
[Contact : Dave Scroggy]
8423 Production Ave.
San Diego, Ca. 92121-2278

Bud Plant, Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, Ca. 95945

Second Genesis
[Contact : Richard Finn]
1314 S.E. Harrison
Portland, Or. 97214

Styx International
[Contact : Joe Krolik]
Box 3791, Station B
Winnipeg, Man., Canada R2W 3R6

Superhero Enterprises
[Contact : Ivan Snyder]
70 Morris St.
Morristown, N.J. 07960

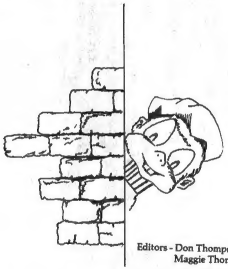
Titan Dist.
P.O. Box 250
London E3 4RT
England

Longhorn Books
[Contact : Jim Cavanaugh]
9200 Chancellor Row
Dallas, Tx. 75247

NEW MEDIA PUBLISHING, INC.
1518 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33612
813-977-2070

The GOLDEN AGE of COMICS

#2



Editors - Don Thompson
Maggie Thompson

Publisher - Hal Schuster
President - Jack Schuster

CONTENTS

Cover...Bob Lewis

4 **The Fighting Yank in Comics**

"Four-color comics of all brands offered patriotic heroes as a remedy to cure the ills of reality or at least to help people to forget them for a time."

5 **The Fighting Yank**...A complete Golden Age Story.

17 **Blue Suit, Blue Mask, Blue Gloves, No Socks**...Article by Maggie Thompson.

"I must be the Spirit and I must never carry a gun! But still I must fight crime bare-handed! No other crime-fighter can make that stupid statement."

33 **Will Eisner II**...A revealing interview with Maggie Thompson.

"They're intelligent human beings who have feelings, who have ideas and want to write about them and this is their medium, and that's exactly what it is to me."

39 **Sunday Spirit**...The complete Spirit Story from May 7, 1950. Previously unreprinted.

46 **Will Eisner Part II**...Cat Yronwode and Maggie Thompson conduct a panel discussion with Will Eisner and Andre Le Blanc.

"I was very new to the game and I learned a lot from Jerry Iger, sitting next to Reed Crandal, sitting next to some of the names which became legends.

56 **A Tribute to Wallace Wood**

57 **Dr. Fu Manchu**...One of Wally Wood's two best non-EC works. A complete 25-page story.

Non-Comics Contributors This Issue: Bob Lewis, Don and Maggie Thompson, Cat Yronwode

Many Thanks Go To: Dick Lupoff, Betsy Curtis, Alan Light, Bill Blackbeard, Bill Thailing

---

THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS is published monthly by New Media Publishing, Inc., 1518 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33612. It is distributed in England by Titan Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT. POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to New Media Publishing, Inc., 1518 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33612. This magazine copyright 1982 by New Media Publishing, Inc. Individual pieces are copyright 1982 by their respective creators. Note: We have made every effort to locate the current copyright holders of complete stories reprinted in this issue. If such holders will contact us, New Media Publishing, Inc., will pay its standard reprint fee. New Media Publishing, Inc. does not intend to infringe upon any copyrighted or trademarked material.

The FIGHTING YANK

"America's Greatest Defender" was the cry heard thoughout a war-torn United States. The country was beset with enemies abroad, spies and saboteurs at home, and was just barely recovering from the greatest economic disaster the country had ever known. Four-color comics of all brands offered patriotic heroes as a remedy to cure ills of reality or at least to help people to forget them for a time, even if only for the short period of time that they were absorbed in reading the exploits of the flag-bedecked heroes winning their persistent victories. It brought hope to a people badly in need of winning rather than merely losing as they had for years. First they had suffered through economic catastrophe and then, just as hope seemed around the corner, a war began which brought the entire world to the brink of destruction as a madman marched through Europe winning battle after battle and subjugating one country after another. Every comic book company presented its national heroes in the hopes of wringing that additional sale. There was Captain America from Timely Uncle Same from Quality, the Shield from MLJ, and many, many others. But this one was a little different. This one was the epitomy of the American Patriot --in fact he looked exactly like a famous patriotic hero who helped to found our country. And that combined with his unique costume and the excellent artistic quality he recieved was his stock in trade. With it he became one of the two most popular heroes published by Nedor Comics.

Sharing honors with the Black Terror as one of the two mainstay characters of Nedor, the Fighting Yank was really Bruce Carter III, the linear descendent of Bruce Carter, the greatest hero of the Revolutionary War and a man who always come to the aid of his country when he was needed. Even beyond death the early American reached out to aid his modern day counterpart in finding the ancient cloak from which the younger man was to derive his powers and identity as the Fighting Yank.

Richard Hughes, who had also co-created the Black Terror, and Jon Blummer collaborated to bring this new hero to life in the pages of the tenth issue of *Startling Comics* (which was cover dated September of 1941). The designed a character which would immediately give the image of America with tri-cornered hat and flag-bedecked chest and endowed him with the powers of super-strength and invulnerablility. And while he was not the first colorful hero possessed of superpower to appear on the pages of a comic magazine he was certainly one of the best drawn. He enjoyed the talents of a long sucession of very capable artists including Jack Binder, who worked on the strip from 1942 until 1943, Alex Schomburg, who labored the longest from 1943 until 1949, Jerry Robinson, who provided the art from 1947 until 1948, and Mor Meskin, who added his talents to the pages from 1948 until 1949. This group of artists was one of the most pestigious of the 1940s and between them accounted for many of the most popular characters of that decade.

Fighting Yank outlasted many of the characters which preceded him and indeed many of those which followed but, like so many other excellent works of fantasy, perished with the approach of the 1950s. In all he appeared in *Startling* from Sep-September of 1941 until January of 1949 and thus from issue number ten until 48, in *America's Best* from April of 1944 until February of 1948, and in his own title for 29 issues. In 1949 he finally left the mortal pale for that Valhalla for superheroes somewhere in the sky. But certainly somewhere in the United States when the need becomes critical both the Fighting Yank and his illustrious ancestor will once again heed the call for "America's Greatest Defender."

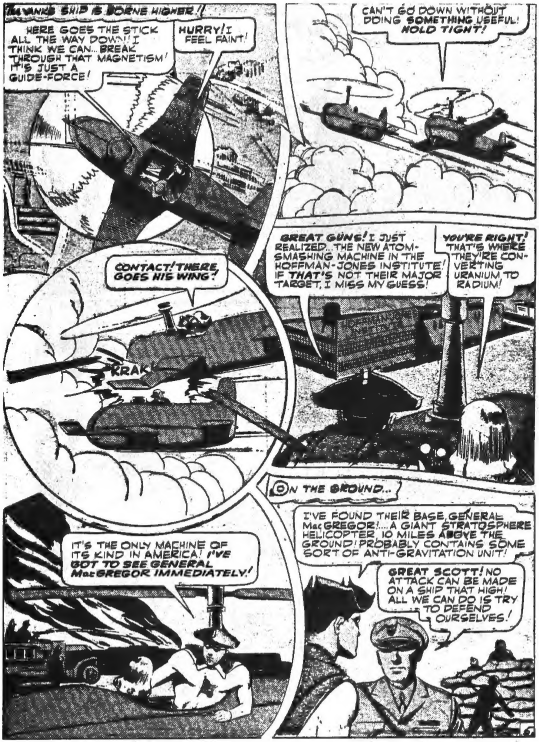
THE FIGHTING YANK
AN EAR-SPLITTING BLAST FROM THE HEAVENS, AND FANTASTICALLY ARMORED SOLDIERS HURTLE DOWN UPON THE HEART OF AMERICA! WHO ARE THEY? WHERE HAVE THEY COME FROM? CAN THIS BE THE LONG-DREADED MARTIAN INVASION? BRUCE CARTER HAS NO TIME TO SPECULATE AS HE FLASHES INTO THE GARB OF THE FAMOUS FIGHTING YANK, TO OPPOSE THE INTRUDERS WITH SLUGGING FISTS AND THE INSUPERABLE COURAGE OF AN AMERICAN PATRIOT!

Fighting Yank #11, copyright by Nedor Publications

IN THE LIVING ROOM OF BRUCE CARTER'S HOME, ONE QUIET EVENING.
SCREE..!
IT'S CUT THE RADIO OUT!
GREAT GUNS! WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
WHEEEE
SOUNDED PRETTY CLOSE! MAYBE WE CAN... THE RADIO'S COMING BACK NOW...
...A SURPRISE INVASION OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT! THE ATTACKERS ARE JUST SOUTH OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION! THE INVADERS CAME BY AIR, AND MAY ACTUALLY BE SOLDIERS FROM MARS!.. THIS IS A SPECIAL EMERGENCY BULLETIN AND NOT A RADIO PROGRAM!
SOUTH OF GREAT LAKES! THAT'S CLOSE BY! I'M GOING OUT TO INVESTIGATE!
SURELY IT CAN'T BE REAL!
STAND BY FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS!
OUTSIDE, THE SKY IS LIT BY GIANT FLAME-THROWERS!
GREAT SCOTT! THERE'S PLENTY GOING ON! AND RIGHT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE FACTORY SECTION!
VOROOM
ZOOM
A MAJOR AMERICAN ARSENAL IS UNDER ATTACK!
THIS IS A JOB FOR THE FIGHTING YANK!
WHOOSH
WHAM
POW!
GOLLY! BULLETS BOUNCE OFF 'EM!
BUT MY FIST WON'T!
SPLAT
2

ARMORED HELICOPTERS MENACE THE DEFENDERS!
IN THE DOOMED FORTRESS...
THEY MUST BE MAGNETIZED TO REPULSE PROJECTILES! OUR SHELLS HIT THEM TOO SLOWLY TO HAVE ANY EFFECT!
BA-ROOM!
BOOM!
AN INSTANT LATER... THE ARSENAL'S STORES ARE STRUCK!
VO-ROO-OOM!
I'VE GOT TO STOP THOSE BABIES!
BRRRP!
YANK!
JOAN IS SEIZED!
YANK! HELP! --EEK!
JOAN! WHAT--

As the helicopter climbs
WHAM!
You can walk home, brother!
The strange warriors zoom skyward!
Look, Yank! They're rising against gravity!
Must have anti-gravitation apparatus in their shoes! They're all clearing out!
A mile up!
We're rising, but the controls are all in neutral!
I know! This plane is magnetized by something and I want to see where it's heading!
Into the sub-stratosphere..
Not a thing, and the air's getting too thin to breathe comfortably!
The other planes are following but we've got a start on them! See anything ahead, Joan?
Pursuing American planes turn back!
No go! Air too thin to pull our weight!
Suddenly... a giant stratosphere helicopter!
Jumpin' Jehosaphat! That must be their base! I can't go any higher! Got to use these controls to get down!
4.


THE WINGED SHIP IS BORNE HIGHER!
HERE GOES THE STICK ALL THE WAY DOWN! I THINK WE CAN BREAK THROUGH THAT MAGNETISM! IT'S JUST A GUIDE-FORCE!
HURRY! I FEEL FAINT!
CAN'T GO DOWN WITHOUT DOING SOMETHING USEFUL! HOLD TIGHT!
CONTACT! THERE GOES HIS WING!
KRAK
GREAT GUNS! I JUST REALIZED.. THE NEW ATOM-SMASHING MACHINE IN THE HOFFMAN-JONES INSTITUTE! IF THAT'S NOT THEIR MAJOR TARGET, I MISS MY GUESS!
YOU'RE RIGHT! THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE CONVERTING URANIUM TO RADIUM!
ON THE GROUND..
I'VE FOUND THEIR BASE, GENERAL MacGREGOR!... A GIANT STRATOSPHERE HELICOPTER, 10 MILES ABOVE THE GROUND! PROBABLY CONTAINS SOME SORT OF ANTI-GRAVITATION UNIT!
IT'S THE ONLY MACHINE OF ITS KIND IN AMERICA! I'VE GOT TO SEE GENERAL MacGREGOR IMMEDIATELY!
GREAT SCOTT! NO ATTACK CAN BE MADE ON A SHIP THAT HIGH! ALL WE CAN DO IS TRY TO DEFEND OURSELVES!

THE FIGHTING YANK SAYS HE SAW A STRATOSPHERE TRANSPORT SHIP CARRYING SCORES OF HELICOPTERS!
GOLLY! ARE THEY REALLY MEN FROM MARS?
MEN FROM MARS...? I WISH I KNEW! ALL I KNOW IS THAT WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT AS WE'VE NEVER FOUGHT BEFORE!.. AND AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED IT'S NOT GOING TO BE DEFENSIVE!
THIS HELICOPTER IS THE ONLY PLANE WE HAVE THAT MIGHT MAKE IT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE, GENERAL MacGREGOR! I'M DETERMINED TO DO WHAT I CAN...FIGHT THEM RIGHT AT THEIR SOURCE!
IT SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE, YANK, BUT GOOD LUCK!
AT THAT MOMENT, FAR ABOVE, A SINGLE PLANE LEAVES THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP!
WITH A SPECIAL OXYGEN MASK!
ZZZZZOOOM!
THE TWO ARMORED CRAFT APPROACH EACH OTHER...
WELL, WELL! CUSTOMERS ALREADY! IT'S MY FUNERAL OR YOURS, BROTHER, SO HERE GOES!
A HEAD-ON SMASH!
ALLEY-OOP!
CRASH!
6

WHAT I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN IS WHAT MAKES YOU TICK!
WHAT THE... GULP. GIVE ME THAT!
AS YANK'S CONSCIOUSNESS LEAVES HIM, AS THE GIANT CREATURES BEAR HIM ALOFT!
WITH WANING STRENGTH.
THUD!
OH!
HELMETED WARRIORS PRESENT HIM TO THEIR LEADER!
EXCELLENT! BUT HE IS REVIVING! TIE HIM OUTSIDE THE STRATO-COPTER! HE WILL DIE FOR LACK OF OXYGEN! HA! HA!
THE MECHANICAL DOORS SWING OPEN!
TWEEEET!
AHH...
7.

HIT HIM AGAIN! THERE MUST BE NO SLIP-UPS! OUR INVASION IS SCHEDULED IN ONE HALF HOUR!
POOM!
OH-H..!
ENGINES! FULL SPEED! PORTS TWO, FOUR, SIX -- OPEN!
AS THE MIGHTY ARMADA SPEEDS OVER AMERICA, A HERO OF THE PAST AWAKENS! BRUCE CARTER!
WHENEVER MY COUNTRY IS IN DANGER--
STRONG HANDS BREAK THE BINDING CHAINS!
AWAKEN, MY SON! WE HAVE WORK TO DO!
ANCESTOR! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WOULD COME!
SNAP!
THE ATTACK! WE'VE GOT TO CRACK THIS STRATO-SHIP SOME-HOW!
FIRST WE'LL SMASH THEM ON THE GROUND! COME! THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE!
INTO THE MAELSTROM OF DESTRUCTION!
WE MUST SAVE THE ATOM-SMASHING MACHINE! THAT'S THEIR FIRST TARGET!
WAIT 'TILL THEY HIT THE GROUND! THEY'RE GOING TO RUN INTO A PECK OF TROUBLE!
ZOOM!
ZOOM!
9.

NOW THAT I'M GETTING INTO MY OWN ATMOSPHERE I CAN START TO WORK!
LET'S SEE YOU BOUNCE BACK FROM THIS ONE!
DISINTEGRATING RAY GUNS DESTROY COMPLETE BATTERIES AT ONE BLAST!
BOOM
IN THE NICK OF TIME!
EASY NOW! WE'RE LANDING!
GIANT BLOW-TORCHES EAT AT THE ATOM-SMASHERS ROOF!
BLAZES! IF OJIE GUNS WON'T STOP 'EM, I'LL HAVE TO USE MY BARE HANDS!
WHEN I SAY HANDS OFF, I MEAN IT!
POW
POW

OUR BIGGEST GUNS MIGHT MAKE A DENT IN THOSE CREATURES, BUT WE CAN'T RISK SMASHING THE INSTITUTE BUILDING!
THE FIGHTING YANK'S HOLDING THEM OFF BUT EVEN HE CAN'T LAST LONG!
WITH SUICIDAL COURAGE, AMERICAN PILOTS DIVE INTO THE MASSED SOLDIERY!
BUT THE MIDGET TITANS LEAP TO THEIR FEET!
CAN'T KEEP THIS ROOF SAFE MUCH LONGER! SOLVI! LOOK AT THAT HUMAN ROCKET!.. THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA!
PLUNGE INTO THE BESIEGED BUILDING!
THIS THING IS ALWAYS IN A STATE OF MAGNETISATION, AND IF I CAN JUST TURN IT ON FULL FORCE!
THE NEGATIVE MAGNETIZING LEVER!
HERE GOES SOMETHING! ALL FOUR THOUSAND TONS OF HER ARE GOING TO BE NEGATIVELY CHARGED!

WITH YANK'S GUARDING FIGURE GONE, THE CREATURES INVADE THE INSTITUTE...
BOOM!
JUST AS I THOUGHT! THOSE MEN ARE NEGATIVELY CHARGED AGAINST OUR GUNFIRE SO STRONGLY THAT THE NEGATIVE ATOM-SMASHER CREATES A POWERFUL REPULSING AGENT!
AND IF THE REST OF MY THEORY IS CORRECT, WE'LL SEE THE POSITIVELY CHARGED STRATO-SHIP IN A FEW MINUTES! BUT JUST TO MAKE SURE...
YANK SEIZES A ROCKETING FIGURE!
UFF!
MIND IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE COMPANY?
ON SECOND THOUGHT, I DON'T LIKE THAT SILLY FACE YOU'RE WEARING!
WHAM!
AH!
UPWARD INTO THE THINNING AIR!
WOW! THIS IS FASTER THAN ANY PLANE COULD CLIMB! IT'S THE MAGNETIC PULL OF THE STRATO-SHIP!
11

THE STRATO-GIANT STRUGGLES AGAINST THE GREAT ATOM-SMASHER'S POWERFUL MAGNETIC ATTRACTION!
AHA! FAIRLY TEARING IT'S PROPELLERS OFF, BUT IT HASN'T GOT A DOG'S CHANCE! IT'S ALREADY DOWN TO FIVE MILES! IT'S POSITIVELY MAGNETIZED, AND THE ATOM-SMASHER HAS A NEGATIVE CHARGE... AND OPPOSITE FORCES ATTRACT, EACH OTHER!
GETTING TO BE QUITE AT HOME IN THIS PLACE! THE CONTROL ROOM FIRST... JUST TO SPEED THINGS UP!
WHAM!
YOU DON'T MIND IF WE GO DOWN DO YOU? YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING!
YOU...
DESPERATE LEAP!
YOU CAN'T LOSE ME, BROTHER! YOU'RE GOING TO ACT AS MY PARACHUTE!
AS THE SHIP DRAWS CLOSE, HUGE GUNS OPEN UP FROM BELOW!
AND THE LITTLE SHRIMPS ARE ALL GOING HOME TO MAMMA, TOO! THIS IS GOING TO BE A PARTY!
BOOM!
SIX PROJECTILES STRIKE THE STRATO-GIANT AT ONCE!
KERBOOM!
LATER, WHEN THE LEADER'S HELMET IS REMOVED!
I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE KRAFT THE INTERNATIONAL SPY! YOUR MARTIAN DAYS ARE OVER, FOR YOU AND YOUR ARMY OF JAP HENCHMEN!
ALL RIGHT YOU'VE GOT ME! BUT FOR THE FIGHTING YANKS, MY PLANS FOR NATIONAL DOMINATION WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED!
GREAT WORK, YANK!
STAMPS WILL STAMP OUT THE AXIS! BUY MORE WAR BONDS!
12

BLUE SUIT, BLUE MASK, BLUE GLOVES- AND NO SOCKS

by Maggie Thompson

Originally published in The Comic Book Book. Published by Arlington House, edited by Richard Lupoff and Don Thompson. This version has been updated by the author.

June 2, 1940, was a Sunday. That morning, families all over America settled down to read their newspapers, each person grabbing a favorite section. One read about Nazi bombers raiding the Marseilles and Lyon areas (Paris reporting 56 German planes downed in a day — including some in the Rhone Valley forays) and about the British evacuating Dunkerque under bomber and artillery blasts. One considered movie listings, trying to choose between the well-reviewed *Grapes of Wrath* and *Road to Singapore* and maybe Mickey Rooney's latest — *Young Tom Edison*. Another grabbed the radio page and decided (once again) that Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, and *One Man's Family* would be his evening's home entertainment. It was old and favorite fare.

But the lucky kid who was first to grab the Sunday funnies found new pleasure there.

That day the world was an unsettled place. Within less than a year, Hitler had invaded Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg - and much of the British Commonwealth was fighting him. A few Americans were leaving home to cross the border into Canada - to seek out the war. And the United States was a temporary refuge for Canadians who were trekking south, hunting sanctuary from Canadian draft quotas.

The second year of the New York World's Fair had begun. Lines were being drawn for the political fight that would end in November with Roosevelt's whomping Wendell Willkie by 5,000,000 votes.

The 35,000-ton U.S. battleship *Washington* was launched at the Philadelphia Naval Yard; it was the first capital ship to hit the water in America in 19 years. A fever was growing steadily, impelling us to war.

But we were entertained by other things. Over 45,200,000 radio sets were estimated to be in use. Jack Benny, Guy Lombardo, Bing Crosby, Frances Langford and Lowell Thomas were more familiar than our relatives. A nation listened to *Information Please* and *Lux Radio Theater*. The kids listened to *Let's Pretend* once a week - and *Amos 'n' Andy* were known all over the country. The *New York Daily News* polled other papers and named Mickey Rooney and Bette Davis King and Queen of the Movies.

First class mail was three cents an ounce and if you mailed a letter for *local* delivery, it was two cents an ounce. (Air mail was seldom the service of choice - because it cost six cents an ounce and that was just too much to pay ...) And the penny postcard cost a penny.

Into this world of June 2, 1940, the Spirit was born. Chances are that most kids grabbing that Sunday section would care more about finding a new hero - one whose adventures would go on for more than a decade - than they cared about FDR. The once-a-week hero would wander through a violent world while the *real* world went through war, atom bomb, formation of the U.N., cold war and well into the Korean "police action". And, too, through the first commercial television broadcast and the growth of that medium - which was among the most powerful forces in loosening the grip on children's entertainment that had been held by comic books.

There it was, held in many a small hand. The upper-left-hand corner proclaimed it a "WEEKLY COMIC BOOK" and the upper-right-hand corner pointed out that it contained "3COMPLETE STORIES." Sure enough, it was a comic-book - thrust in the midst of the traditional weekly comic strips. It was comic-book size and shape but without a cover. It had 16 pages and, yes, three complete stories.

The second story in the book was "Lady Luck"

by "Ford Davis" - and it took four pages to tell of an escapade by Lady Luck ("a name veiled in mystery, spelling adventure, action ...). She was a criminal-on-the-side-of-good, cracking safes to help right wrongs - who changed from the ballgown-wearing Brenda Banks to the green-cloaked "mysterious costume of Lady Luck". Her costume consisted of green dress, green gloves with a white shamrock design, green cloak and wide-brimmed green hat pulled jauntily over her face. No mask. In fact, the mystery about the costume consisted of why no one recognized her and why on earth she would select such clumsy garb - especially the high-heeled shoes - for climbing about on window ledges. They were green high-heeled shoes. By the end of the first story, naturally, Police Chief Hardy Moore was already falling for Brenda.

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REAL MURDER EVIDENCE AGAINST THE SKULLISH MOB ... WHY NOT LET ME GO IN AND GET A WRITTEN CONFESSION?
YOU? ALONE?! WEE!...

The third story was about "Mr. Mystic" - supposedly by "W. Morgan Thomas". With nice artwork by Bob Powell, this five-pager introduced another magician to the comic-book world. "Ken", an American, gave up his place in a plane evacuating "a tiny country in the path of an invader" - apparently in Europe: the premier's name was Professor Padewski. To save the premier's memoirs, Ken took a single-engine plane and just escaped destruction - only to be caught in a storm which blew him far off course "to the south-east". *Very* far off since the plane "flutters into a mysterious canyon somewhere in the Himalayas". (Quite a gas tank, even with the storm's boost.) Apparently, this fulfilled a prophecy of seven lamas who lived where the plane crashed. Unconscious, Ken was taken by the seven - "We shall brand him with our sign and make him all powerful!" "After we burn the symbol on his forehead, the mysteries of life shall be known to him." After tying his arms to a beam, one of the lamas cried, "Oh, holy branding iron, impact thy wisdom in our choice! With this brand, I name thee ruler of magic, disciple of the seven lamas and knight of righteousness." Awakened by the pain of branding, Ken was informed that his every wish would come true, whereupon he promptly replied, "Yeah? Well I wish I was free to beat your ears off!" He was magically freed - but the lamas had left. Eventually, he found himself clothed and a voice from the sky told him: "You will be known as Mr. Mystic, endowed with unlimited powers to combat the forces of evil plaguing the Earth. Go and do your work!" Which he did. With humor and good art and scripting.

It was the first story in the booklet, however, that gave its name to the little comics, as far as the kids were concerned - for the pamphlets were untitled as a unit. The only name appearing at the top of the first page - which was all the "cover" the booklets possessed - was the name of the paper that circulated them. But they became known as "Spirit sections" - because the life of the weekly comic was, indeed, the Spirit.

"The Spirit by Will Eisner" was the heading on that first strip in the first booklet - and it was not by any means an earth-shaking story. Denny Colt ("criminologist and private detective") offered to help Police Commissioner Dolan get Dr. Cobra. Colt announced to his friend Dolan that he wanted the reward for Cobra and asked for an hour's head start towards capturing the villain. Colt found the evil scientist in Chinatown, tangled with him and his assistant Leeng, fired his gun accidentally into a vat of strange chemicals and was drenched by the liquid. When the police found him, he seemed dead - with rigor mortis already set in - of heart failure. He was buried in Wildwood Cemetery. Later, a mysterious figure held Dolan at gunpoint, announcing his intention of claiming the reward for Cobra and calling himself the Spirit. (He later told some crooks, "I am the Spirit of good ... but I can also be the Spirit of evil.") Dolan confronted him to confirm that he was, indeed, Denny Colt - and Colt explained: "When I tried to capture Cobra, the vat with some chemicals in it, smashed! I was put in a state of suspended animation! Believing me dead, you fellows buried me ... I came to several hours later and broke out of my grave!"

Dolan and the Spirit tracked down Dr. Cobra

and captured him together - with Dolan saving the Spirit by shooting the villain as he was about to stab the crimefighter. Denny announced that he intended to remain dead and take up the job of being the Spirit. "You know, Dolan, there are criminals and crimes beyond the reach of the police, but the SPIRIT can reach them!" "But how about food, money? Where'll you live?" "In the cemetery ... As for money, I'll collect the rewards ... Oh, we spirits get along fine!" He even had calling cards - miniature tombstones on which was printed (carved?):

"THE SPIRIT"

Address: Wildwood Cemetery

Dolan cautioned Denny that if he went outside the law, he would have to arrest him. "*If you catch me!*" replied the newly hatched crimefighter.

Denny was Denny throughout. Blue snap-brim hat, blue suit, red tie. No gloves - and no mask. Just a good-humored detective type - out to join the ranks of outside-the-law crimefighters. (Consider the contradiction in terms in your idle moments ...)

Thus began a strange New Wave in comics. There was little about this experiment in marketing besides its new concept of *existence*. It reversed an earlier trend in comics. Instead of reprinting comic strips in comic-book form (which is how comic books had begun years before), Will Eisner, Everett M. Arnold (the copyright-holder) and the Register and Tribune Syndicate (the distributor) reversed the trend. They brought the comic book to the newspaper - and were to succeed quite well for more than 12 years.

But this is not why Eisner and the Spirit are so fondly remembered more than 40 years after that initial appearance.

New marketing concepts may cause waves in the world of the dollar, but they don't do much for the memories of a generation of kids. What stuck in *their* minds were the *stories*, told by a master of the new art of the comic book.

The first story - the origin of the character - was routine. Not so were the tales that soon developed. The Spirit got a mask and gloves, both of which he wore constantly and the plots grew strange. The story told on 19, October 1941, has remained fresh in minds that no longer remember grade-school classes attended the next day. "It is the year 2941 *A.D.* and humans still trod the earth - Why not - ?? People as we know

THE GUN I SHOT HIM WITH!.. THE ONLY EVIDENCE MISSING IN YOUR CASE AGAINST THIS MIGUEL SANCHO!!
AH! VEREE GOOD..AND YOUR STORY, MEESTER COLT ??

them change very little in 1,000 years -" Two archaeologists, digging in the western United States, uncovered a Spirit section (preserved by the sap of a tree nearby). It told the story "The Oldest Man in the World" - in which the Spirit tangled with an incredibly ancient codger who had been sabotaging a new Rocky Mountain airport. Police shot the robed old man, whom the Spirit then tried to comfort: "Here - Have a drink!! Whew! Looks like that bullet entered your heart ... Before you die, tell me, why did you -"

"*I Die?* Thunderous blasphemy in empty chasms, *No! Ten Million Times No!!* I am *Ageless! I Shall Live Forever! ... Look!* ... Little ant of the earth - *See* - My wound has *Stopped Bleeding!* It is *Healed!*"

In cackling frenzy, the bearded one decided to tell the Spirit the secret of his miraculous survival. "Eons ago - *Before the Birth of Time* - I was banished from the pale of men! I was *Sentenced to Live Forever* - for a crime so great that the tiny fishes on the ocean floor recoiled with *Shame!*" He had tried to kill the President at the airport "*Because I Wish to Stop the Growth of the Human Race! There are too many people on earth!!* They are crowding me off the surface - Soon Cities will be all over and I will have no *wild country* to *Hide* in! *Haaaaaaa!* I will halt the growth of the human race for *One* generation!! Yes - I will destroy all the *Children* on earth! I will lead them to the sea - and *Drown* them!!"

And off he went, playing his flute, as the Spirit stood open-mouthed. Sure enough, the next day he began his trek, gathering children as he went, leading them to the sea. The Spirit, circling over

the sea cliff in his autoplane, decided to die when his death would serve a purpose - to jump into the sea, taking the old man with him. He leapt from the autoplane (piloted by his assistant, Ebony) onto the old man on the cliff - and they both fell towards the sea. Ebony swooped down and caught the Spirit in mid-fall, "while far below, the sea sucks a new victim, down, down into her cavernous depths."

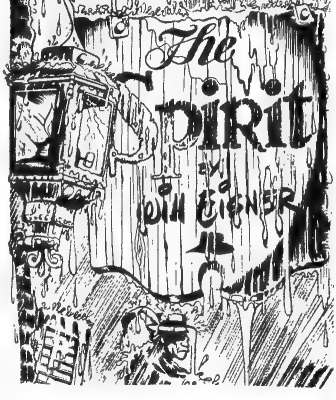
The archaeologists finished the story. One scoffed: "The oldest man in the world - I cannot believe *That!* He was a charlatan - *A Fake* - and the Spirit was a fool to risk his life ..." Suddenly, he collapsed, a knife in his back. The other was felled by a shepherd's crook. And, over the bodies, there stood the old man - who broke into crazed laughter, shouted *"Crashing Thunder in the Caves of the Deaf!"* and danced off, playing his flute.

Now, *that* story was remembered - and remembered vividly - for many, many years.

As the world grew, so the stories of the Spirit grew. Eisner moved his creation into science fiction as well as fantasy, developing story-telling in comics into an art form - and doing it with humor as well as power and freshness. In fact, the plots and concepts were so powerful that they overshadowed the character of the Spirit at times. (This was unusual in a medium in which the hero himself is usually the *raison d'etre* for a heroic series.) It was the *spirit* of the Spirit that moved *The Spirit*. He viewed life with tongue in cheek, as well as with the determination that Right Should Triumph.

And *Eisner* viewed life with a creative approach previously unseen in comics. The art was stunning and experimental - to such an extent that other comic-book artists studied his work. The influence of the strip was enormous in the world of cartoonists - and many fledgling artists studied the techniques that Eisner's work-force developed over the strip's dozen years. (In 1950, letters reached the point where Dolan and the Spirit's kid assistant Sammy, answered fan mail for one entire story. It was revealed that the Spirit was 73 inches tall. How much did he weight? Sammy checked and then embarrassedly announced, "The day of the gaunt, thin, hawk-like crimefighter is *Over!*" When a question from a prospective artist came in concerning production methods, Eisner phoned Dolan to say: "Original Spirit pages are drawn on two-ply kid-finish Bristol Board, 13 inches wide by 17 7/8 inches deep ... A B6 lettering pen is used for 'balloons' and a number 2 brush or a Chinese brush for inking!" While he had Eisner on the phone, Dolan asked with fiendish grin, *"Why does the Spirit wear his gloves day and night ... even when he goes to bed??"* Eisner hung up. Dolan muttered, "Cartoonists are too @#***!! sensitive!")

The layouts and storytelling devices were unusual and stimulating and the reader was led to breakneck reading paces by unusual combinations of script and panel. Harvey Kurtzman, years later, ran a display in *Help!* magazine of some of Eisner's artistic techniques, using sample panels as well as a sample story. Rain, running water and the like (all problems of the comic-book artist) were imaginatively handled. Splash panels (the story introduction on the first page) were incredible - with imaginative methods of working in "The Spirit" as title. One story had it spelled out in paper washing down the street to a gutter. Several had the word spelled out in odd-shaped buildings. The name might be found on a "Wanted" poster - or printed on a storefront window, or written on a road sign, or traced on fogged glass, or half-buried in snow - or it might simply be done in elaborate lettering to set the mood. All this artistic virtuosity was not simply Will Eisner's alone, but his was the name signed to the strip.



Will Eisner was born during World War I. Prior to World War II, he had developed a career in the world of cartooning, doing strips for different comic books and finally joining forces with other creative hands to turn out an assortment of comic strips. Jerry Iger and Eisner set up a group of people (one writing and doing character design, one penciling, one inking, one lettering) to turn out comics. "We made comic book features pretty much the way Ford turned out cars", Eisner commented to an interviewer years later. In 1940, he sold out the shop to Iger and formed a partnership with Arnold.

"I always thought of myself as a craftsman when doing The Spirit. The Spirit was really a culmination of all the talent, skill and imagination I could muster. Prior to that time, I was just making a living. The Spirit was the first major effort in my life where I was able to do something I wanted to do, and was doing something I thought was meaningful and at the same time making money on it." He discussed his work at length with an interviewer for the magazine *Witzend*, John Benson. Eisner told Benson, "Comics before that were pretty much pictures in sequence and I was trying to create a *thing*, an art form."

Eisner was guiding force, creative hand and supervisor on the strip from the beginning - and the strip suffered greatly when he left it in mid-1942 to serve in the U.S. armed forces during the war. Fans of his work all over the country rejoiced at the return of his hand at the very end of 1945. Many of the same people worked on the strip during the war who worked on it while he was there, but the switch was noticeable: the humor virtually disappeared, as did imaginative layout, outre stories and technical pyrotechnics. Without Eisner, the stories were pedestrian, the art very staidly well-drawn and the plots mostly limited to detective stories.

But those working for Eisner were a talented lot, whether working with or without his help. On the strip worked such men as Tex Blaisdell (artist on *Little Orphan Annie* for a while after the death of Harold Gray), Robert Powell, Alex Kotzky (now doing *Apartment 3-G*), Lou Fine, Ruben King, Jerry Grandenetti, Jim Dixon, Marilyn Mercer, Wally Wood and Jules Feiffer. Some penciled, some inked, some scripted (Feiffer was among these), but Eisner held things together. When he lost interest in being the mainstay of the strip, it fell on hard times, dwindled and died.

The first issue of the armed forces' *P.S. Magazine* came out in June 1951; it was "published monthly in the interest of Preventive Maintenance for service-wide distribution to all organizations as part of the *Preventive Maintenance Program*" - and was to take over where *Army Motors* left off when the United States demobilized in 1945. Eisner's name appeared on the cover - a drawing of two privates carrying a "dead" jeep in the midst of an Army convoy. *P.S.* was free from your favorite motor pool, motor officer, or motor sergeant. The magazine passed issue 200 in 1969, having helped maintain material during the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. (Eisner told Benson: "I'm a teacher; I'm turning out instructional material. I don't feel the slightest feeling of guilt, or separation, or any realtionship between that and what I might think about war as war, or warmongering as war-mongering ... I have been devoting the last 20 years, really, to developing the comic strip media which I have always experimented with, into a serious teaching tool. This is really the thing I'm proud of. And I'll teach anything with that tool.")

So Eisner turned to straight instruction - and *The Spirit* fell by the wayside. If your paper didn't carry the strip, you did have a few other chances to see it as its grip on life loosened.

(Remember, this 16-pager probably had the largest circulation of any comic book ever. By mid-1942, papers carrying it included the *Philadelphia Record*, the *Detroit News*, the *Washington Star*, the *Chattanooga Evening Times*, the *Newark Star-Ledger*, the *Syracuse Herald American*, and the *Baltimore Sun*. Distributed by the Register and Tribune Syndicate, it reached an enormous audience.) Kids in towns like Cleveland, which *didn't* have a *Spirit*

supplement on Sunday, could find reprints of the stories in comics from Vital and Quality (which existed in some sort of symbiosis) from September 1942, through November 1950; Fiction House from Spring 1952, through 1954; and Harvey in October 1966, and March 1967. His own comic ran a total of 22 issues with Quality, five with Fiction House, and the two with Harvey; he also ran as a feature in *Police, Modern* and *Three Comics Magazine*. Only Harvey ran any new *Spirit* work (aside from an occasional cover) in comic books. The feature was brought totally up to date by a very odd feature in *New York* (then the *Herald Tribune's* Sunday magazine) on January 9, 1966. But more on that later. In 1973, almost simultaneously, Eisner authorized limited circulation black-and-white reprints of *Spirit* stories from the first ones, and Denis Kitchen's Krupp Comic Works in Milwaukee began issuing a *Spirit* underground comic book with reprints and with new covers and some new *Spirit* comics by Eisner. Neither of these publications was widely distributed, however.

More recently, Warren Publishing Co. produced sixteen issues of a magazine, aptly titled *The Spirit*, in which Spirit stories were reprinted - totally out of sequence and usually in black and white.

When Warren abandoned the project, Denis Kitchen picked it up with the seventeenth issue and has now published more issues than Warren did. Kitchen's magazine, under the able editorship of Spirit historian Cat Yronwode, has also restored some semblance of order to the reprints, avoiding the frequent instances when chapters of a long, continued story would appear in random order and with installments missing.

Kitchen's *Spirit* magazine does not have the distribution and circulation it deserves - it can be found chiefly in shops specializing in comic books - and there still are many comics fans who have not been exposed to *The Spirit*.

Those who saw it loved the strip for its *stories*. There were stories of far-out fantasy (time was condensed into an element and injected into a man contemplating murder); of overwhelmingly villainous men (the Squid, a master of disguise, worked for "the Fatherland" and was fought by the Spirit - he was later replaced by the Octopus); of strange politics (Mr. Bowser, the dogcatcher, was unanimously elected mayor when Mayor Blast was injured in a criminal attempt to frame him for suicide); of seasonal tales (there were tales for spring, Thanksgiving, Halloween and Christmas - "The Christmas Spirit" of course). There were glorious parodies - like the one for September 18, 1949: the splash page was the "cover" of *Lurid Love* (subtitled "Sickening stories, about other people's misery & heartache") and the story included a page-for-page takeoff on love pulps of the day (love problems answered by Wanda Lust; a blurb advising that the magazine was "Written for people in love - about people in love - by people in love"; even ad parodies).

It was possible to build up a chronology of the life of the Spirit from the series. Told in various issues, the story began as follows: Denny Colt was a kid in the "slums of Central City's lower East Side". He lived with his uncle, a has-been fighter and met the young girl Sand Saref. His uncle became involved with crooks who shot Sand's policeman father - and Denny's uncle then "did the only thing his puch-battered brain could tell him. He killed himself on the spot." (Sand was totally embittered towards the law by this and had allied with the world of crime by the time she showed up as an adult in 1950.)

As Denny Colt grew up, he became an aide in the commissioner's office - and at some point gained an inheritance from his father, Denny Colt Senior. (It can be assumed that it was in some sort of trust fund to be turned over when he became 21 - thus explaining his poverty in youth.) The Spirit had to explain to tax men later, "I've been living on the principal of that inheritance and the *legal tax* was *paid years ago when* the estate was *liquidated* ..." He apparently struck out independently at some point since he was a private detective by the time of the first

story.

After Denny's "death", he set up housekeeping in Wildwood Cemetery (in a fancy, apparently underground apartment) and acquired an assistant and a girl friend. Ebony, the assistant, was a short Negro stereotype when introduced and he appeared in the first story driving a cab. By the third week of the strip, the Spirit called a cab and noted: "Say, every time I call a cab, you turn up! Are you the only cabby in town?" "No suh, Boss, but ah sho' is de fastest! Mah name is Ebony White!" "Swell, Ebony ... From now on, you'll be my exclusive cabby ... Now, step on it! We've a few stops to make!" *"Yassuh, Mr. Spirit Boss!"* From that moment, Ebony was the Total Sidekick, holding the gun on captives, rescuing protagonists when necessary and living with the Spirit in that strange apartment in Wildwood. (If the apartment was a do-it-yourself project, as it must have been to remain secret, it was one of the fanciest. Windows were round, there was some sort of large picture window and, of course, it had a fully equiped laboratory.)

In the earliest strips, the locale was New York City (which was to the north of Wildwood), and a woman lawyer, the Black Queen, at one point decided to hold up New York City and rob it of $50 million — by cutting off Manhattan and cleaning out the Treasury Building. (That story introduced the autoplane - the Spirit's invention - which looked like an ordinary red car till a button was pressed which telescoped wings from just over the front fenders and revealed the propeller coming out of the engine. No, it was not a stunning gimmick, but it came in handy as a plot device for years - even when it occasionally got forgotten in the midst of a story,

as when the Spirit traveled to Sumatra by autoplane and returned by boat.)

July 21, 1940 - less than two months from the strip's beginning - the Spirit was framed for murder and began a career that ducked inside and outside the law for years. "I'll continue to fight crime, but from now on without the aid of the police!" This work plan occasionally threw his friend Dolan into embarrassing situations, since their friendship continued to be close and strong (especially since Dolan's daughter soon broke her engagement to Homer Creep and started a steady relationship as the Spirit's One True Love). At one point and another the outlaw would be sanctioned by this or that law enforcement body; he became a confidential agent-at-large for military espionage in October 1940 - and at one point (in the spring of 1949), the Governor made him special deputy to Dolan.

The follow-up told of an attempt by the Spirit and Ebony to take up a legal life. They took a sixty-dollar-a-month apartment and were besieged instantly by telephone man, reporter, telegrams, laundryman, electrician, salesmen and the like. Suddenly, the carefree outlaw was confronted with piles of regulations and tons of paperwork. *"I'm Through!* The only danger there is around here is getting *Writer's Cramp!"* And later, "Dolan ... I can't stand by and see gangsters make a monkey out of justice because of a regulation!! I guess I can only fight crime in my own way ... no forms ... *No Rules!"* The story ended with a "vast dragnet" to capture him ...)

The finances of freebooting were the subject of a few stories. In April 1947, he had owed $25,000 back taxes - but a job he did paid off the debt. By April 1950, Dolan worked out for him, "No matter how we *figure* it, this crimefighting business (*sic*) costs you $20,000 a year more than you *realize* from your inheritance." They tried ads in

a Situations Wanted column. (At the end of the story, he was still short $7,000 and decided to travel overseas to pick up more money - which resulted in stories alternating for a time between the Spirit in Africa and Sammy, Dolan and the rest in Central City.)

There were two changes in the strip, you see, from the earliest days. Early on, it was decided that the city in which Dolan was commissioner was Central City ("80 minutes to Washington ... by air" - and in all respects but name and politicians it was still NYC). ("My whole background is a city boy ... all my culture is city culture ... Central City was New York City as far as I was concerned, and the city politics was obviously what I knew and understood", said Eisner.)

The other change was in assistant. Ebony served faithfully for nine years. He was a rich character, a humorous character, a varied character. He had heartbreaks and loves, likes and dislikes. He was brave and loyal and fierce. He was known to solve cases that the Spirit fouled up. He had his own circle of friends, chief among whom was Pierpont Q. Midas. He saved the Spirit's life, often.

But he became an embarrassment because - in character design and speech pattern - he was a Negro stereotype. From the first, he had blubber lips and pop eyes. He was a comedy-relief shrimp whose comedy often came from his deciding that he deserved more respect than he was given. It was never made absolutely clear what his age was; to begin with, he was a cab driver, but later on (in 1946) it was necessary to point out that he was privately tutored by the Spirit. His other friends were children. The year 1946, in fact, seemed to mark the first effort to Do Something about Ebony. In the strip for February 10, a Negro major criticized another character who mocked Ebony: "You're being very unfair! It's no disgrace to talk with a *Southern* drawl! What's more, my grandfather was a minstrel during the Civil War and I'm *proud* of him ..."

"To me, Ebony was a very human character and he was very believable at the time."

As a sort of substitute, Blubber the Eskimo (same size as Ebony - and same general type of character) was introduced and Ebony went off to Carver's School for Boys. (The title was changed shortly - and it was referred to as Mr. *Carter's* school.) By mid-May, however, Blubber headed back to the North Pole and Ebony returned home.

It took till 1949 to drop Ebony conclusively - and the Christmas strip that year did not show him. The new sidekick was a kid (similar in design - but white) named Sammy.

"Ebony was done with a great deal of love and affection", Eisner told Benson. "To me, Ebony was a very human character and he was very believable ... at the time. With all the idealism I had then, I felt that he deserved to be treated as a human being and have emotions. Remember, that was a breakaway in itself ... no one ever showed Negroes in comics with any emotions other than weeping over the death of poor little Mandy and the little white girl. Only Ham Fisher did anything like it and he stayed with the safe stereotype." (Which is all well and good unless you happen to be one of those who enjoyed the late Walt Kelly's work on *Our Gang* from 1942 to mid-1949. We watched him evolve the character of Buckwheat quite swiftly from the cowardly comic stereotype of the *Our Gang* movies to the completely rounded, nonstereotyped *individual*, Bucky. *That* was a character of great humor, *none* of which came from looks or accent or superstitions.)

Reportedly, though, Ebony never brought criticism at the time from black groups and some even praised Eisner for the use of the character. Nevertheless, Ebony's disappearance was thorough, though one nostalgic scripter apparently forgot in it 1951, long enough to have the Spirit wonder whether Ebony would pop up out of the hideout as the Spirit took someone through Wildwood.

One thing did *not* change in the strip - and that was the bevy of women who became involved with the Spirit, many of them lusting after his fine, manly body.

The first *lasting* Other Woman in the Spirit's career was Sylvia Satin alias Silk Satin alias Black Satin. In the prewar years, she was the main rival of clean-cut, normal-American, pretty-blonde Ellen Dolan for the attentions of her Robin Hood friend. Satin was introduced in 1941, and hung on grimly, popping up every so often to match wits with the Spirit and to see whether she couldn't win him *this* time. Originally an international crook, she became a British agent (winning a total pardon for her crimes) and eventually settled in Scotland as an investigator for the insurance firm Croyd's of Glasgow. (She was the widow of a German count and had a daughter, Hildie, born in 1939.) While she had no success winning the Spirit (who *liked* her *but* ...), she *often* outwitted him.

Many women entered the Spirit's life after the war - but four stood out as favorites who returned again and again to complicate things for the crime fighter: P'gell (introduced Oct. 10, 1946), Saree Raymond (January 12, 1947), Sand Saref (January 8, 1950), and Darling O'Shea (July 9, 1950). All of them loved the Spirit; all tried to win him away from Ellen Dolan - who managed to hold out against this assortment of devastating females. (On occasion, a sorely wounded Spirit would lapse into a coma or other unconsciousness murmuring "Ellen ..." He never paid this tribute to any of the others, much to their chagrin.)

The gorgeous siren looked out at the reader and said, "I am *P'gell* ... and this is *not* a story for little boys!!" She began her life in the strip married to Hans Dammt (a Nazi) in Turkey but promptly had him killed for $500,000 and married Emil Petit (who had arranged the assassination and had another $500,000). Petit

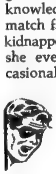
was more than 300 years old (thanks to a secret formula), but P'gell arranged to do him in and he died in front of her, turning to skeleton and dust. She married *his* murderer and continued her career. "Oh, brother, what a man!! If only you were a crook, what a team we'd make!" she exclaimed to the Spirit after saving his life. And she went through husband after husband, accumulating money as she progressed; by January 1947, she'd had seven marriages and was about to marry a certain Mr. Raymond and become headmistress of an exclusive girls' school. ("C'n you think of a better background for advising young girls on the rough road of life?")

The daughter of the widower Raymond was Saree - a bobby-soxer who developed a crush on whatever eligible male happened by. She and P'gell made quite a team after Raymond joined the list of P'gell's dead former husbands. Eventually (after an episode involving her hiding crooks in the school), P'gell married Mr. Quinse (who owned the school, a treasure and a big loan company). She later tried teaching French in Riverbend University (60 miles south of Central City).

Sand Saref was "the big love" of Denny Colt's youth - and would occasionally return, like P'gell, to try to persuade him to go crooked. There was great mutual affection - but it was a sort of nostalgic thing.

MOTHAW... I'VE BECOME AQUAINTED WITH THE SWEETEST, MOST DEMURELY SHY LITTLE GIRL, I ... I.. THINK I'LL MARRY HER.
HMPH! BRING HER IN, CHAUNCEY! I'LL MEET HER!

In 1906, Tydeland O'Shea bought 25 acres of barren land; four years later, he owned 300 oil wells and 5,000 acres of rich country. At age 55 he married, but two years later he and his wife were killed in an oil well explosion, leaving their baby daughter, Darling. Darling O'Shea was the richest woman in the world and madly in love with the Spirit; in her introductory story, she hired him as her bodyguard and battled the passenger-cargo ship *Imperial* for possession of him (the ship was intensely jealous) and barely survived. For Darling was determined, gutsy and powerful - and came up to just above the Spirit's belt buckle. She was a little girl - but *some* little girl! "I may be young in years ... but I am old in knowledge ..." At ten years old, she was total match for a mentally unbalanced murderer and kidnapper unlucky enough to threaten her — and she even managed to unsettle the Spirit occasionally.



But Ellen was his True Love. (In 1942, Eisner briefly explored what would happen if they ever married. There were bows decorating the underground hideout, ruffles on the lab shelves and even Ebony's room was straightened up.) Her love was true, and she'd lend a hand even at times when it seemed as though the Spirit was lost to her. While there were several strips in which she seemed the stereotype of Female Nitwit, Eisner would occasionally delve a bit deeper to make her a rounded and independent person, thoroughly suited to someone the stature of his hero. In November 1950, she ran for mayor of Central City with such comments as, "Most men practice equality like a *little* boy practicing on the piano, one hour a day and then *forget* all about it!" The women loved her; the men adored her. (The Spirit was so infuriated that he backed Mike Poltax on the Prosperity Party ticket - a chap of such sterling quality that he kidnapped Ellen.) Ellen won the election by a landslide - and that was that. It made no difference to the couple's relationship and Ellen did quite well at the job. (This sort of thing seldom happened in comics; Lois Lane was still turning in copy 30 years after meeting Superman.)

Villains appeared and reappeared in the series, with three major ones. The Squid was *The* major prewar menace. Introduced January 18, 1942 - in the section with the first mention of the U.S. entry into the war - his aim was the destruction of American defense and he was fought by the team of the Spirit (working for Army Intelligence) and Satin (working for British Intelligence). The Squid was identifiable by green hood and goggles, blue gloves, hat and trenchcoat. As happened now and again, everyone seemed to have masqueraded as everyone else by story's end - with the Squid donning a rubber mask over hood and goggles at one point. He soon came to regard the Spirit as his personal enemy - and the feud lasted till, in December 1945 (just after Eisner returned to the strip after the war), an "atom bomb" blew up the villain once and for all.

He was soon (the following July) replaced by the Octopus, an important war criminal who was initially fought by the Satin-Spirit duo (with Satin now working for the U.N.). "The *Octopus* is the head of a vast criminal ring that is forming again! Every criminal worth a lead bullet *anywhere* on the earth operates with his consent ... He is the king of crime!" And all you saw of the Octopus were his gloves and sleeves; he was even more secretive than the Squid. (Maybe they were brothers? Their methods and style seemed

much the same ...)

The other master villain was also a postwar threat - a *nasty* creature who made a living after the war by bilking relatives of people missing in action. Mister Carrion had as pet the vulture Julia - a bird as vicious as Carrion himself - who almost killed Blubber, the Eskimo kid sidekick.

It was not, however, any of these who made *The Spirit* the incredible memory it was. Other strips had gorgeous girls. Other strips had great villains. Other strips had developing characters. But *The Spirit* had concepts, plot-lines, story ideas like no other strip. "My big influence in stories ... is the short stories - the O. Henry short stories, the Ambrose Bierce short stories and so forth ... *The Spirit*, actually, as I saw it (and as I saw comic books), was nothing but a series of short stories. They were the pulps in visual form", Eisner said.

Some of them involved the world of the Spirit as a cartoon character. One had Eisner complaining about the life of a cartoonist: "Here I am, a *stooge* to a *crimefighter* - *He* has the adventures and I work my head off *drawing* 'em!! - One of these days I'm going to have adventures of my own and I'll make the *Spirit* draw 'em! Gee - *sigh* - *Will Eisner* by the *Spirit*. Hmm - Wouldn't look so bad at all!!" A crook came in, ransacked Eisner's files, found out the true story of the Spirit's origin. "Boy, the underworld would pay a fortune for dis!!" And the story went on from there.

Some had fantastic base for stories: Ebony bought Aladdin's lamp which gave three chances to call on the genie; the first two times the genie would help you; the third, he would kill you. Mortimer J. Titmouse, a janitor in a nuclear plant, played at inventing an atomic bomb - until he developed one that worked. Everyone shoved Tooty Compote around until the day he told someone to drop dead - and the man did. The continuing story of Boot Camp, where crooks hid out in the Rocky Mountains - without aging. Santa Claus got amnesia and wound up with hoods - whom he finally got to deliver Christmas presents for him. Time ceased to exist for everyone in the world - except for one crook. Professor Tempus J. Fugit confessed to killing the Spirit - on January 21, 1970. (In that one, 20 years from the "now" of the story, the Spirit had married Ellen. There was a new super-throughway from Central City to Los Angeles. The Spirit had a son; the Spirit wore a mask and blue cape, hat and gloves - while the son wore a blue cape. There was full employment, fine homes where there used to be slums and not a gun in the city. Eustace Dolan was the state governor. And "a man with a *gun* would be in a *great* position of *power*.")

Some had inventive story-telling devices: The parallel stories of lookalikes convict Carboy T. Gretch and husband Cranfranz Qwayle, were

told in opened comics pages which paralleled until the stories met. The "Song of Little Willum" - about Gitch the goonie - approximated Longfellow's trochaic meter and threw in some comments on comics:

"Meanwhile"...ah yes, "meanwhile"
What's a comic without "meanwhile"?
Helpless are we minus "meanwhile"...
So for us to use our "meanwhile"
We must switch the scene to Dolan's.

And some of the story-telling devices were even bound up in parody: A "cover" of the Spirit for *Rife* magazine, with inside "photo articles" on the various members of *The Spirit's* cast of characters. Some stories had advertising takeoffs for opening pages: "She's Ugly! She's Engaged! She Uses *Pool's toad-stool facial cream*. Plucked from the health at the fleeting moment of a maddening midnight moon." "Distinguished Men prefer Borschtbelt's Buttermilk." Some were totally wild stories, such as the mystery involving Al Slapp (creator of stupid mountain boy *Li'l Adam*), Elmer Hay (creator of *Little Homeless Brenda)*, and Hector Ghoul (creator of *Nick Stacy*): "No ... no ... Don't call the cops ... I didn't kill *Slapp* ... Why, the only time people read *Homeless Brenda* is when he deigns to mention her in his strip!" The Spirit defeated Hay's giant Oriental bodyguard by painting over his blank white eyeballs.

On the other hand, there were stories of power and suspense. There was an extended sequence in which the Octopus blinded the Spirit (in which much use was made of all-black panels). There was one in which the Spirit was wounded in the left leg - and weeks later faced the threat of am-

putation as the doctor's recommended treatment. There was almost always a lot of action in a Spirit story - and quite frequently a good dollop of violence. The Spirit was bashed and clouted and shot and submerged and kicked and clawed and starved and tortured and choked. That mess of chemicals which put him in rigor mortis in the first place must have had some life-preserving properties to bring him out of all that intact.

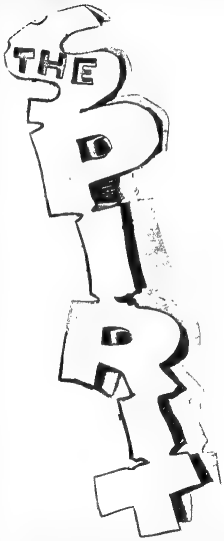
But maybe not so intact, after all. In 1952, the strip began a rapid decline. The art was perfunctory, the Spirit became a humorless clot - reacting to one villain by clenching his teeth and snarling, "*You fat slimy rat!*" Stories were often retellings of earlier stories. *Lady Luck and Mister Mystic* had been dropped long since and the booklet was only eight pages long. Even when there was humor, the art was unimaginative and far more crude than ever before. On July 27, 1952, the title was changed to *Outer Space* - and *featured* the Spirit. September 28, 1952, was the last Sunday on which people found him in their funnies - except for one last surprise.

The *New York Herald Tribune* ran a Sunday magazine called *New York*; the issue for January 9, 1966, which featured articles on "The Great Comics Revival", gave prominent attention to the Spirit. In addition to articles by Eisner's ex-staffers Jules Feiffer and Marilyn Mercer, the magazine contained a generous dollop of *Spirit* - a new strip done to fit the larger format and running five of those giant pages.

It dealt with the attempts of Hobart Naught (Assistant, Deputy Vice Commissioner for the Investigation of Indefinable Waste, appointed

1933) to wipe out John Lindsay before the election, so that Naught's bureaucratic stronghold wouldn't be eliminated. Naught's secretary, it turned out, was Ellen Dolan - who learned of the scheme and went to Wildwood to get help to thwart the plan. (Of the old characters, only Ellen and the Spirit hadn't aged. She hadn't seen the Spirit in years and commented that when she had given up hope that he'd marry her, she resigned herself to spinsterhood and took a city government job.) Ebony was fat, wore glasses, short haircut and business suit and said, "I'm an executive in Haryouact ... I'm not anxious to get mixed up in city politics." Dolan wouldn't help because this was his last chance to be police commissioner of New York City. (He was 87 and not likely to get another chance.)

The Spirit wore a single-breasted suit, a narrow tie and button-down collar. Otherwise,



he was the same old Spirit - except for the socks. People have pointed out that the Spirit never wore socks; the leg that showed between cuff and shoe was almost invariably colored "flesh" in those old sections. The reason has been cloaked in as much mystery as why the Spirit always wore his gloves, even to bed. But in the *Herald Tribune* that Sunday, the Spirit wore baggy socks - and even appeared briefly without his gloves. It's as though Eisner decided to break the traditions with that "final" appearance.

(There were new stories in the Harvey comics - a retelling of the spirit's origin in No. 1 and the life story of Zitzbath Zark - who grew up to be the Octopus - in No. 2. But the attempt was abortive and succeeded mainly in increasing the demand for the few tattered old *Spirit* sections that survived into the mid-sixties, thus causing their prices to go up.)

But the influence remained and continues in comics to this day. It was felt in the EC comics of the early fifties - and it can be seen in cartoonists' styles now.

The parodies Eisner worked with were brought to full fruition in such later magazines as *Mad*. In 1946, the Greater Buffalo Press, Inc., noted that it had *Spirit* sections "together with translation into Spanish available as an aid in learning Spanish". In 1972, English teacher Glen Johnson was using *Spirit* sections to teach American Indian children English.

A comics fan wrote Marvel Comics a letter which ran in *Fantastic Four* No. 32 (November 1964). He said that in No. 29, they had "printed probably the world's first photo-within-a-comic". More than once, the Eisner studio experimented with photos incorporated in standard comic-book stories - and did it more successfully than later hands, to boot. Twenty years before Marvel's "first".

Maybe someday there will be a definitive hardcover collection of the best of those influential works. It should sell like the proverbial hotcakes - not only to those who remember the strip with fondness but also to art students, to lovers of well-told short stories, to fans of great comic art, to popular-culture historians and to fantasy and action fans.

Meantime, those who were lucky enough to read the newspapers or comics starring the reincarnated Denny Colt will have to depend on memories.

They'll remember the imitators who sprang up

TUM TE TUM...? NOW JUST ADD A LITTLE COFFEE FOR FLAVORING... CAN'T TAKE THIS STUFF STRAIGHT, LIKE I USED TO!
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
BURP
SHALL WE GO, GIRLS?
CALLING ALL CONTESTANTS

after the birth of the Spirit - Midnight (in *Smash*) and the Mouthpiece (in *Police*) from Quality, to name a couple. Blue suit, mask, blue hat, etc. ... But no humor of any high level at all - and not the spirit of the Spirit.

They'll remember Aunt Mathilda (sister of Diogenese Dolan's "poor dead wife" - yes, Dolan apparently had more than one first name over the dozen years of the strip). Mathilda went through more than five husbands (that varied, too). "Hinkey married me of his own free will!! He might have been unconscious and the Justice of the Peace tied up ... but *it was legal!! I want my man!!!*"

They'll remember Hazel P. Macbeth - a genuine fourteenth-generation American witch. (Whe entered the competition for Miss Rhinemaiden of 1950 - and was highly regarded by Central City's children.)

They'll remember the classic song that was a continuing gag for months - "Every Little Bug" - which grew to such proportions that words and music were run in April 1947. In fact, the biggest guest star the sections ever had - the only real-life guest - was Robert Merrill, who (it was announced) would perform the song. (Whether or not he ever *really* did couldn't be turned up by research.)

They remember the stories of the Christmas Spirit, a year's-end tale of joy and hope, no matter what the year. Some were light, some were tear-jerkers, but you didn't forget them.

They remember the strip for December 31, 1950, when Eisner's assistant (looking just a bit like Jules Feiffer) shot Eisner and did a recap of the past year's adventures. Feiffer drew the little-kid strip that ran on the back page of later sections, about a boy named Clifford. So the recap showed Clifford as the Spirit, opening with the statement: "I must be the *Spirit* and I must *never* carry a gun! But still I *must* fight crime *barehanded!* No *other* crimefighter can make *that* stupid statement!" And the strip was a gorgeous parody of elements of Eisner's style - including his nifty love for sound effects. Feiffer put in shoe-heel-on-concrete sound effects in sandy desert scenes. (Eisner's style has been called "Filmic"; it actually derived as much from radio with its emphasis on sound.)

They remember King Hobo and Willum Waif. They remember the candy-sucking kid.

And they wonder.

They still wonder.

Why *did* the Spirit wear his gloves day and night, even when he went to bed?

Will Eisner

(Golden Age of Comics editor Maggie Thompson conducted an interview with Will Eisner, the dean of comic art, the man who many consider to be the greatest artistic genius to ever work in the "sequential storytelling" medium. In fact the very phrase itself was popularized by Eisner. The interview, during which Will Eisner was very candid and imformative about the inner workings of comic book production during the 1940s, is here presented in its entirety.)

Eisner: Jules Feiffer came to work in my shop primarily as a kind of a studio assistant. He wanted to do anything. One of his first jobs was just doing coloring, because I always tried to control the color, anyhow in my shop, even though it was done at the engraver's. Then, later on, very soon it became evident that Jules had other talents than that and he began doing balloons and then ultimately writing stories. He did some background work for a while, but his talents weren't really there. So it was a kind of growth. My shop always had that kind of growth. Now what happened was that in the course of the coloring of the *Spirit*, since we provided the color guide that was sent to the engraver, no one really ever figured out what color his socks should be. We figured he had socks, but he had a blue suit and brown shoes. We couldn't give him red socks; I never made the socks black. (I should have, but I never did.) So at first we made them blue, and then the engraver thought it was a mistake, because the blue came down from the blue trousers, you see, so he would leave it out, and so it kept constantly being left out. And after a while, actually, literally, we just—it was kind of a massive ten-year oversight. I never paid any attention to it. I still to this day don't know what color socks he should have. Jules picked it up because he was concerned, and it was always very funny with him, because he would say, "Gee look, he's got no socks on!" and we would laugh and think it was very funny.

Maggie: Feiffer said his favorite was the one that took place in a candy shop but he couldn't include it in his collection because he'd written

the script.

Eisner: *Ten Minutes*? I think it was called *Ten Minutes*. I'm going to say for the record that I'm not absolutely certain. If Jules says so, Im inclined to believe him--or I was until recently, when he claimed that I'd written some stories that I was sure he wrote. And I'm sure I wrote stories that he says he wrote. So I'm not sure which. The thing that he will tell you, I'm sure, and that I will tell you is that my shop generally was kind of a--very heavily cooperative affair. And it depended on who did what. Basically the idea, the main thrust of the idea, and the editing of the idea was mine. After a while, I learned to trust Jules to write balloons without question. But anybody who has worked with me knows that I'm like a chef. I can't keep my hands out of the pot. Particularly since what Jules did was write the balloons, make little, squiggly, thumbnail layouts and then I would get it and I would draw--either tight-pencil the drawings or I would ink the drawings--depending on who was assisting me at the time. And in the process I would alter the balloons. He always inked tha balloons first, before the story. We only had five days, really, to turn out seven pages. I would have a splash page all roughed out or sometimes tightly drawn that I'd done Sunday evening or on my way down on the subway train. An then it would be a take-off point, and I would talk the story out. How that story came about, I don't know, but I would say that there's a lot of input a lot of Feiffer dialogue in there that is stuff that I couldn't have--that I would never have written, left alone. But then again, remember, that in a shop like that everybody pretty soon...It's like if you were suddenly dropped into a small town in the South, you'd develop a Southern accent before long.

So I would say if Feiffer claims that story, I wouldn't be suprised if he's right.

The pilosophy [of *Ten Minutes*] is essentially mine, as differentiated from Feiffer. Feiffer to this day doesn't think in terms of that kind of philo sophical concept, like the ten minutes in a man's life. You look at my body of work, you'll see I always seem to build on that theme. On the other hand, my dialogue isn't as crisp and as sharp and sometimes as incisive as Feiffer's is. Feiffer has--he always did--have an increidible ear for dialogue and in the way people talk, particularly. Now in the matter of this little girl bouncing a ball...Remember, too, that Feiffer and I have the same background, ten years apart. We both lived in the same area so we both came up and lived the same kind of childhood, except, perhaps, that his parents were half a notch or a notch higher on the social scale than mine. So we would tend to say--probably, I might have said, "Hey, remember 'A--my name is Alice, B--my name is--'?" "Oh yeah," he said, "I'll do that." He later included it in *Clifford* and so forth. But that doesn't mean I should get credit for it.

On the *Spirit* story, it's different than it was, let's say, in Eisner-Iger--where I sat at the head of a big table, did roughs and then they'd would be gone on down and each guy was doing his own thing. In the case of *The Spirit*, Fieffer would sometimes rough out a story. Later on, when I got to be very busy, and I was doing other things (Of course, I was building a company called American Visuals at the time), the rought would come to me. I'd go over it. I'd make whatever changes I felt, and then Abe Kenigson (who we can't seem to locate any more; if ever he reads this, will he please get in touch) did the lettering on the balloons, and then pencilling--the basic layout-breakdown-pencilling--was either done by me or somebody else. I would do the heads;no one else would do the heads. In the story you're talking about, I did all the drawing and all the heads, so it was all mine. So the story would remain pretty much in either one or two hands at all times. There were sometimes two stories going at the same time. So Abe was lettering the story for the following week, while somebody was doing pencils and background.

Bob Powell came with me when I left Eisner-

Eiger and that was 1939. In 1939 I had this opportunity to do a newspaper syndicated comic-book for the first time in history of newspapers. I was very intrigued with the idea and I was at the same time half-owner of Eisner and Iger. We had a contract, Eisner and Iger , a stockholder's agreement, because we were a corporation, saying that whichever stockholder wanted to get out, he had to offer the other stockholder first opportunity to buy him out. He couldn't sell it to somebody else and couldn't keep it if he left. So I offered him my half of the business or offered to buy his half. He said he would rather buy me out, so he did, and a part of our agreement was that I had an opportunity like the baseball player to say, "Well, anyone who wants to come with me," so he put everyone on waivers, and three artists said they wanted to come with me. They didn't want to stay with Eiger. One was Lou Fine, one was Bob Powell, and the other was a fellow named Chuch Mazoujian, who later left to go into the advertising field. Chuck took over *Lady Luck*; Bob Powell took over *Mister Mystic*; and Lou Fine worked on the magazines--I was doing a magazine. So that's how Bob Powell came into it. Feiffer only showed up in my shop in 1946-47.

LADY LUCK
WHO IS THIS MYSTERIOUS, DARING, AND ELUSIVE "LADY LUCK" WHO COMPOUNDS THE UNDERWORLD --- AND LEAVES THE POLICE BAFFLED - AS TO HER TRUE IDENTITY!!?
BY
KL. NORDLING

Maggie: Did Powell work separately? And did he use a brush?

Eisner: He started out using a pen. Yes, ma'am, he used a pen. I don't think he used a brush during his tenure with me. He may have used a brush later when, apparently, he went to work with Joe Simon, 'cause the other day I interviewed Joe Simon. Joe Simon said he had been working with Powell for a long time on a magazine called *Sick* and he was working in kind of partnership with him, and I said to Simon, "I can't imagine Powell doing that kind of stuff," and he said, "Oh yes," he said, "Powell developed the use of the brush after the war and did that." But while he worked for me, always (even when he did Sheena--he did Sheena for a while-Mort Meskin did Sheena at first at Eisner and Iger , when I designed and created Sheena--Mort Meskin did the first ones, Bob Powell did a bunch of them a while after Mort Meskin left, and then I think he was doing Sheena when he came with me.) Bob used a pen all the way. And he was the only one of the artists who really wanted to write. I was trying to get artists to write. I always beleved that; I still do. In those days the artists didn't want to write, and there was a reason for it. It wasn't that they didn't think they could, but the comics pages were going at around $5 or $6 a page in those days. The money, even in those days in 1939, in order to achieve, say, $25 a week, (which is big money for cartoonists at that time), you had to turn out a lot of pages, you know--five pages of pencils and inks. And they got less than that, 'cause I took--the house took--a commission. So nobody wanted to write--really write. Now, I could write pretty fast, so I wanted to do it. And I always found writing fairly easy for me. Bob, however, when he came with me, insisted--or offered to, I don't mean insisted. He said, "I'll write." Chuck Mazoujian, on the other hand, said he didn't want to write *Lady Luck*. All he was interested

in, really, was being an illustrator. Lou Fine really didn't want to write, so I did a lot of the writing. But Bob was really a good writer, a very intelligent artist, and I really mean that, I have a strong feeling about thinking artists and non-thinking artists. People who have heard me lecture can testify to that. And he virturally, after a while, did his own thing. He would talk story but by that time in the studio that was producing *The Spirit* we were so close to each other, at least

intellectually, that we know pretty much what was going, so I didn't have to make a command that they didn't want to comply with, and they didn't do something that I philosophically...For example, my taste didn't run to wild overt sex. I didn't like to do wild layouts. I didn't think--I still don't think that wild layouts are the solution to the problem. They're only in service of the idea. They are not the thing at all. Page layout, as far as I'm concerned, has to do with the story essentially, not with the sensory impact that's very important to newstand comics, where people are flipping them open. You must remember that our audience at that time--we had the only comic book that was written for an adult audience. For adults and young people.

The newsstands couldn't accomodate so-called "Adult comics." They weren't able to until now. With the arrival of the so-called underground market and the ground-level as it is today, it's the first time that you see definitely an adult audience. Even up until a few years ago, the word "Adult comic" meant a pornographic or soft-core comic, and now one of the great revelations for me here, on of the joys in the last few years--why I've devoted my life, really, to this market--is that I'm in touch with the audience that I really care about, which is an adult audience. And I can talk to adults about the things that I really want to talk about which is man's relationship with God, our life experience, our meanings of life, our common experience in our philosophy, and our struggle with life and living--which you can't talk about in children's comics or even in fantasy comics. Fantasy comics are talking about two mutants struggling over a half-naked woman and that's not, as far as I'm concerned, that's not what it's about.

Within the frame of whatever "Didactic" means,[teaching] yes, I'm a didact. I'm a dyed-in-the-wool didact. I'm teasing because I spent a

JOE DOPE
DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT LUCKY PIERRE?
...NO. TELL IT TO ME!
WELL, SEEMS PIERRE WAS (LUCKY FOR HIM) DRAFTED LAST YEAR... A WEEK AFTER HE WAS FIRED OFFA HIS JOB.

long time between 1950 and 1970 really, when I departed from what I call the entertainment comic world and spent my time building and running and operating--hopefully sometimes successfully--a company that is devoted to the employment of comics as we know them or what I like to refer to as sequential art as a teaching form. I learned about it as a teaching tool during

World War II; that's what led to Joe Dope and all that. I realized its power. And then I realized, as people always do when they're working in a field, "Oh my goodness! What we're doing is teaching!" It's storytelling. Teaching is nothing more that the exposition of an idea in a clear form, if you want a definition of "teaching." I spent a long time trying to convince the pedagogical community that this form is a valid form, and it was always very difficult, because people build up reading and packaging prejudices. To quote Marshall McLuhan, who is often quoted, "The medium is the message." In this case, I would like to twist his quote and say that the medium, as far as the teachers were concerned, was also the package. The medium was also the content. Which, of course, is the thing I'm inveighing against now; I feel that part of the responsibility is the artist, and in an article I wrote in '74 for *The School Library Journal*, I also said part of the problem, part of the responsibility for the teaching community. When they set standards the artist will try to achieve the standards.

WOT NEXT, CONNIE ?
DEAR ME. THIS PIN CAME UNDONE OH, WELL IT'S Spring!
...TO CONTINUE, WE INSPECT TARPS FOR EXCESS WEAR.
TIGHTEN ALL LOOSE BODY NUTS...FAN BELT SHOULD BE ADJUSTED.
FILL MASTER BRAKE CYLINDER, CHECK ALL WINDOWS...GLASS, AND OPERATION!
CLEAN AND RE-LUBE WINCH...AND CHECK WITH ORDNANCE FOR ANY LATE MNO ON YOUR VEHICLE.
I FORGOT... MY FIRE EXTINGUISHER OUGHTA.... BE... CHECKED.

> "They're intelligent human beings who have feelings, who have ideas and want to write about them and this is their medium, and that's exactly what it is to me."

As I turn to the artist and say, "Part of the problem is your fault, because you don't aspire or attempt things that would make somebody who is responsible for the growth and the education of children look at it and say, "Oh, yes, this is good." So both parties are kind of miles apart and each one's blaming the other. But that's typical; you see that all over.

Maggie: Do you see them growing together at all?

Eisner: Yes, very much. What's happened is something in favor of the writer in this field. And that is that over the last few years teachers in the school communities around the country grew up with comics themselves. There are a whole new generation of teachers there. They understand it and they're not as terrified by it. Second is that they've become aware of the fact that they can't get Johnny to read, so they get desperate and say, "I'll take *anything*, that'll get him to read." And third: the output of the comic-book artist indicates a more intelligent, feeling, sensitive human being. The undergrounds spawn in that turgid pool—this dirty little amoeba running around—out of that swamp has come some very, very intelligent men. When I first came across the so-called underground, it was at a convention very much like this that I met Dennis Kitchen and Art Spiegelman and it hit me, "My God," I said, "despite the long hair and the scraggly beard and the T-shirts that don't meet their trousers, these are intelligent people; these are *my* kind of people! They're intelligent human beings who have feelings, who have ideas and want to write about them and this is their medium, and that's exactly what it is to me." Comics--sequential art--is my medium. I regard it as much my singular medium as a writer who

writes only words or the motion-picture man who writes only in movies. This is a definable, singular medium; it has perimeters and parameters; it has grammar; it has distinct rules; and it has limitations; and it has possibilities which have not really been touched. As far as I am concerned, it is literature. It is a form of literature, and while when I first proposed that idea as I talked to my academic friends, there was a tendency to sneer because, like all of us, we have fixed ideas of what is art to a large part of the community--you stop anybody on the street and you ask him, "What is art?" They'll say, "Well, an oil painting--that's art. And an etching--that's art." But how about a series of pictures in sequence with words and text over it. He'll say, "Oh, that's not art. That's comics."

Maggie: Are you pleased with the term "sequential art"?

Eisner: Think of me as a one-man band, walking down the street with a big sign saying "Sequential Art," every once in a while looking around and there's somebody following me, but the line isn't too big at the moment.

[Comic art] is a misnomer. People have tried "narrative illustration" and I struck on "sequential art" about eight or nine years ago. When the School of Visual Arts asked me to teach, they asked me "What do you want us to put in the catalogue?" And I said, "Well, I want to call it Sequential Art because that's what it's all about." Someday I'm going to write a text on it and I have done it and I think you have seen the set of articles I wrote. I've done a series of seven essays that appeared in *The Spirit Magazine* for over the period of a year. I'm putting them together into a textbook; I'm hoping perhaps to get a university, because they were written for the university and they were for the very serious comic artist and writer and also written for the serious comic student. They're not written for the kids or for...it was not intended to tell how to draw big feet and funny noses. There are books like that and they're very valuable. It's really an aesthetic discussion of sequential art and there I

call it sequential art--comics and sequential art--because sequential art was used as a valid art form long before comics appeared. You can go back to the caves, if you want to go back that far, but certainly in the 11th century, 10th century, in medieval Europe, you saw ample use of sequential art. The block prints...ther are paintings. As a matter of fact, there are murals on Aztec pyramids down on the Yucutan where you'll see balloons...and, of course, the ribbons that came out of Christ's mouth in those religious trypticheswere balloons. Art done in a sequence forms the basis of all language. As a matter of fact, art produced in a sequence, drawn in a sequence, or images produced in a sequence preceeded the pictographs that the Orientals used. It's a very old form. I separated two in saying that there is sequential art, and that's a valid art-form that must understand its limitations and potential. Unfortunately, the School keeps putting in parentheses, in the catalogue they say, "Mr Eisner is teaching sequential art and then in parentheses see comics."

Maggie: Has the *New York Herald* piece been reprinted?

Eisner: No, I think it may be reprinted in Europe; I think Denis Kitchen is coming out with *The Art of Will Eisner*. I think it may be in there...It was the first *Spirit* thing I had done in 16 years, when I did do it...And I didn't do another one for another four or five years. I haven't done many really. did one in Canada.

(It was necessary to conclude the interview at this point as it was time for the Will Eisner Panel. An account of this panel discussion follows.)

THE SUNDAY COMPASS

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 1950

ACTION Mystery ADVENTURE

The SPIRIT
Will Eisner
SOMEWHERE ON THE COAST OF INDIA, IN A TINY VILLAGE, THE SPIRIT PAUSES IN HIS TRAVELS.
?
AN AMERICAN PAPER... MONTHS OLD. BUT BY GOLLY IT'S AN AMERICAN PAPER..
HMM.. COMMISSIONER DOLAN HASN'T MADE ANY HEADLINES... THE BIG NEWS SEEMS TO BE.. THE ESCAPE AND CAPTURE OF A LEOPARD IN OKLAHOMA CITY CAPTURED BY DOPED MEAT!
AIEE! SAHIB.. SAHIB!!
WHAT IS IT, BOY? CAN YOU SPEAK ENGLISH??
OF COURSE, SAHIB HOW ELSE COULD I READ THAT PAPER OVER YOUR SHOULDER! THEY HAVE KILLED MOHAMET, MY LEOPARD!
YOUR LEOPARD?.. THIS ONE? HOW'D HE GET TO AMERICA?..
AH, SAHIB ..IT IS A LONG TALE IF YOU WILL ACCEPT A SHOE SHINE, I WILL RELATE IT TO YOU!

Copyright Will Eisner. Reprinted by special permission of Will Eisner. Additional thanks go to Denis Kitchen and Cat Yronwode.

I WAS LIVING DEEP IN THE JUNGLES THAT LINE THE UPPER GANGES WITH MY UNCLE, ABU RAM, A POOR FAKIR COME UPON HARD DAYS... WE WERE PENNILESS BUT RICH IN JUNGLE FRIENDS.
AHHH! SMELL THAT AROMA! SUPPER TONIGHT WILL BE ONE BIG TREAT... GANGES MUD-TURTLE PIE!!
TURTLE PIE? OH NO!!
I'D BETTER GO FOR THE WATER!!
OH WELL, MAYBE IT WON'T BE SO BAD THIS TIME... PERHAPS HE'S LEARNED HOW TO COOK IT! BEARD OF THE PROPHET! THE LAST ONE WAS CURSED WITH A FLAVOR FOR PIGS!
HA! ALMOST READY
NOW I WILL GIVE IT A LITTLE TASTE!
KOF-AGHH GASP WOOSH
BRFFFT... MMMm...?? IT'S ALRIGHT... ONLY NEEDS A LITTLE MORE GASP-PEPPER.
12

MEANWHILE ON THE WAY TO THE WATER HOLE...I WAS HURRYING BACK WITH A PAIL...
YEOW!
MMRRFF
GLUMPH..
HA HA HA! IT'S ONLY OLD TOOTHLESS MOHAMET FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT YOU WERE A REAL FEROCIOUS LEOPARD..HA HA HA
..AND TO THINK, MOHAMET USED TO BOSS THE WHOLE JUNGLE! TSK..TSK...THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE NO TEETH.
AHH..THE PIE IS READY.. HAS LIL PANDIT COME BACK YET, SAHIB PARROT?
NO!
I'LL HAVE TO SEE WHAT DELAYS LIL PANDIT..DON'T YOU TOUCH THE PIE WHILE I'M GONE!
KAF! KAF!.. SPLUTTER PHOOEY!
I WOULDN'T TOUCH IT WITH A TEN FOOT POLE!

TRYING TO BE SMART HE WAS.. WHY I'D.. MUMBLE MUTTER.. !!
HI..CHUM.. WHAT'S COOKING?
OH...IT'S OLD TOOTHLESS... Y'ALMOST SCARED ME..STICKING THAT UGLY PUSS OUT OF THE SHRUBBERY LIKE THAT...WHAT'S WITH YOU, USELESS?
NOT SO GOOD. I'M SO HUNGRY...I'M SO OLD MY TEETH FELL OUT.. AND A LEOPARD WITHOUT HIS TEETH IS A SAD ANIMAL.!
BRUMMFF.. I MUST BE FAMISHED BECAUSE EVEN YOU ARE BEGINNING TO LOOK TASTY...
AWK! W..WAIT A MINUTE.. D..DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!
L...LISTEN..Y YOU WOULD RUIN YOUR GUMS ON ME... WHY I'M NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS OLD AN'..
HEY.. AN IDEA!
LOOK, TOOTHLESS.. YOUR PLIGHT TOUCHES ME SO... I...ER...I'LL LET YOU EAT MY OWN TURTLE PIE... GO AHEAD..EAT IT.!
I WORRY WHEN YOU GIVE SOMETHING AWAY. IS IT ANY GOOD?
SNIFF
IS IT GOOD? WHY, YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO REGRET IT!.. I MEAN YOU MAY LIVE BUT YOU'LL REGRET IT...ULP I MEAN...TAKE IT AND SCRAM... QUICK!.. HERE COMES UNCLE ABU!!
OH WELL.. BEGGERS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS!
THAT NEPHEW OF MINE IS SUCH A WANDERER..HE'S STILL NOT BACK!..
NOW I'D BETTER GET OUTTA HERE QUICK!

MY TURTLE PIE! IT'S GONE!! I'VE BEEN ROBBED!!
AHA!..TRACKS IN THE GROUND, THE CROOK LEFT HIS TRACKS... GOOD!
THIEVES! ASSASSINS! I WILL FOLLOW THEM TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH TO AVENGE THIS INSULT!
MEANWHILE IN THE JUNGLE...
?
OLD TOOTHLESS AGAIN! HE LOOKS AWFULLY DOWN IN THE MOUTH....HEY TOOTHLESS!..WHAT'S BITING YOU?
GRRAN
HE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK UP.. POOR OLD FELLOW..COULD IT BE SOMETHING HE ATE..? NO.. BELLYACHES COME FROM OVER-EATING AND THAT CAN'T BE HIS PROBLEM!
GOODNESS!..THERE GOES UNCLE ABU!..HE LOOKS FIERCE!..AND HE'S GOT A GUN!!
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE'S HUNTING?..OHH! CAN IT BE..? OLD TOOTHLESS ..??....HE'S GOING TO SHOOT OLD TOOTHLESS ?!?
NO!NO!..UNCLE ABU! WAIT PLEASE!! OHHH TOO LATE!
BANG!!

OH UNCLE ABU! HOW COULD YOU? OH WHY DID YOU DO IT?
HUH? DO WHAT?
OH..THIS GUN.... ALL ALONG I'VE BEEN MEANING TO CLEAN IT.. TSK..TSK...
BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND. DIDN'T YOU SHOOT HIM? WHERE IS HE?
SHOOT WHO? I DIDN'T KILL ANYBODY. I FELL ON A SLIPPERY STONE AND THIS GUN WENT OFF BOOM!
BUT WHAT WERE YOU DOING WITH THE GUN??
GRRR... I WAS HUNTING A SNAKE IN THE GRASS! THE THIEF WHO STOLE MY... HUH?!! .. WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?
IT'S IN THOSE BUSHES!
STAND BACK MANDIT. I WILL SEE WHAT IT IS.
GRUAH
IT'S OLD TOOTHLESS MOHAMET!
WH... WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
I KNOW!.. HE'S HUNGRY... HE MUST BE ACTUALLY STARVING! WHY HE HARDLY GETS ANYTHING TO EAT!
NO? IS THAT SO?.. I FEEL SORRY FOR THE POOR OLD THING!.. WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING FOR HIM, EH?

I COULD INVITE HIM TO SUPPER TONIGHT... BUT SIGH... WE HAVE NOTHING TO EAT OURSELVES... GRR... IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON THAT CROOK WHO STOLE MY PIE... I'D....
GROAN
POOR STARVING OLD THING... IF WE ONLY HAD SOME OF THAT PIE!
GROAN
MAYBE I COULD MAKE ANOTHER?
YES!! IT! I WILL MAKE ANOTHER TURTLE PIE FOR HIM!
? ?
WOOSH
HE WAS NEVER HEARD FROM IN OUR JUNGLES AGAIN...
CLEARLY THIS POOR LEOPARD IS NONE OTHER THAN MY MOHAMET... SIGH... TO DIE OF MEAT POISONING!
YEP... ONE COULD ALMOST SAY IT WAS HIS FATE... EH?

Uproarious applause greets the beginning of this panel discussion with Will Eisner, Andre LeBlanc, Cat Yronwode, and Golden Age's *own Maggie Thompson. This panel took place at Chicago-Con in July of 1982. A "Q" indicates a question from the audience.*

Eisner - Thank you very much. I'd get up, but as you just heard, I'm probably one of the few cartoonists who now has a historian. It's a very disquieting thing. If Cat is embarrassed by it--and she is--she'd rather not be known as Will Eisner's Historian, can you imagine how *I* feel? I'd get up but I'm stuck to the chair. I thank you all for coming. The man on my right is Andre Le Blanc, who is an old (yes, he deserves applause; I'll applaud for him) who has been a friend of mine for as long as the *Spirit*. We've known each other since 1939, when I was still part of Eisner and Iger, and we've been in touch and worked together on and off on the *Spirit* but more particularly Andre is responsible for a lot of the *Spirit* pages that *I* get credit for. That is, he's done the inking on some, on some he did some pencilling; he participated in many, many *Spirit* pages, many of which are now still around. A lot of people don't remember, I guess it will come out in the interview, or are not aware of the fact that the *Spirit*, while my name was on it and I get most of the credit, was in many instances a product of group participation. It'll come out in the course of the interview. At any rate, I'll let this get started. Thank you for coming here in this hot, hot weather. I'll answer truthfully as I can.

Maggie - Mr. Le Blanc, How did you get involved with Eisner in the first place?

Le Blanc - Well, I went to work for Eisner and Iger when they were still working as partners, as a team. And then shortly after, they separated.

Eisner - That's when I went to do the *Spirit*.

Le Blanc - I wasn't working on the *Spirit* in those days, I stayed with Iger Studios, because I was very new to the game and I learned a lot from Jerry Iger, sitting next to Reed Crandall, sitting next to some of the names which became legends. So I learned a lot just by being there.

Cat - I just want to say that Andre told me that one of his very first jobs at the Eisner-Iger Studio was cutting up Will Eisner original art and pasting the panels down in different orders so that a scripter could write different script using the same art.

Le Blanc - That was *The Hawk*. *The Hawk* went through fifteen incarnations.

Cat - If any of you collect Golden Age art and ever see the comic-book versions of *The Hawk* ever see the comic-book versions of *The Hawk*, what they are is a Sunday-page-type feature that Will drew, called *Hawks of the Seas* panels drawn by Andre LeBlanc in between them to tell a new story.

I REALIZED THAT MY ADVERSARY WAS AN EXPERIENCED FIGHTER. SLOWLY WE CIRCLED EACH OTHER LOOKING FOR AN OPENING...
THEN WITH A CAT-LIKE LEAP--HE LUNGED--I SIDE-STEPPED AND HE WENT SPRAWLING --- THE AUDIENCE SHOUTED THEIR APPROVAL...

Eisner - It was originally done by Willis R. Rensie.

Le Blanc - (Laughing) Who is this guy, Rensie?

Eisner - Eisner spelled backwards, for those of you--

Cat - But a lot of the work Andre has done has been unknown by fans; the one piece that is

Will Eisner

Andre Le Blanc

known by at least one very enthusiastic professional is "Intellectual Amos," which Alex Toth wrote us about about three months ago and said if you can find any copies, I'll take even bad Xeroxes, just so that I can have samples of this strip."

Le Blanc - Really?

Eisner - Cat was rummaging through in the big vault--she opened the steel doors one day, walked in, and found a couple. "Intellectual Amos" was drawn, I think, as a last-page feature to replace the last eight pages--

Cat - No, no, no.

Eisner - That's why I need a historian.

Cat - Intellectual Amos ran in the *Spirit* section after Fred Guardineer quit Mister Mystic.

Eisner - I was about to say that. It was a really beautiful piece of work; it was Andre at his best and most creative, largely because there was really no instruction. I'd hand the pages to Andre and say "Do it." It probably was the first and last time in his life that he had full artistic freedom. There were just no restrictions on it.

Le Blanc - You could do *anything* you wanted.

Eisner - I think that's still a character that has a great deal of possibility and maybe one of these days--now that the *Spirit* magazine seems to have gotten out of its way, maybe we can bring back Amos. That is a mild kind of tentative, very guarded, carefully worded offer.

Maggie - What does the original artwork now consist of, that which is not chopped up?

Eisner - I'll answer it first from what I understand, but Cat's the one who should really answer it. There exists about 240 stories. Cat, is that right?

Cat - 250.

Eisner - In the original art form. Cat has been cataloguing them over the last three years, now, Cat tells me that there are 240 stories. I'll let Cat answer the rest of it.

Cat - The way I can answer it is that Will Eisner never threw anything away. He lost a lot of things and I went up there and I found things that he didn't know he had. Some of them are appearing in *The Spirit Magazine*. If you've been reading the *Spirit* magazine, you've been noticing we've been running some pre-war stories. Will didn't know he had them, and there they are. He has files. There are big envelopes and they still say "Post Engraving" on them and they're still sealed from 1948, and I open them up and there's art in them, sometimes, and that's it.

Le Blanc - That's how we found the Cupies.

Cat - That's right, yeah, and I found stuff of Andre's. There's stuff Jules Feiffer drew. It's just a big vault of stuff just piled up in there. In 1948 and I think in 1947--Andre was an assistant on *The Spirit*. He did the backgrounds; he did all the animals. Will, among his many talents, does *not* have the talent to draw a realistic dog. But Andre is a tremendous dog artist and draws very good cats, as well. The one story Andre worked on that's the most well known is called *Cromlich was a Nature Boy!* It's been reprinted in the *Kitchen Spirit* [#20]. In the story, Ebony runs into a little, primitive character who communes with

animals and it was an exercise for Andre in drawing thousands of little dogs. And as the story progresses these dogs are following him everywhere. What I'd like to know is how you two worked together. In that story, it's very obvious that Andre did more work than usual. It's really shows up.

Le Blanc - Well, he turned this story over to me and said, "Go on, Andre. Play with it."

Cat - But usually you did backgrounds, right?

Le Blanc - Usually, I did backgrounds and secondary figures. Will always did the heads, naturally, but the figures--there were always lots of figures that neded to be done.

Cat - There's a story that's set in Paris that stars P'gell and has beautiful backgrounds of Paris; did you draw that?

Le Blanc - I remember working on it.

Cat - It looks like your style.

Eisner - Well at that time, Andre was the only world-traveller in the shop. Andre says, "Yeah, I can do Paris," so I didn't have to go through the *National Geographics* which we had piled up to find out those shops of Paris. Andre didn't and I always preferred stuff that was done from the heart. I think what they're interested in, Andre, and would be a good thing to tell, because some of it is vague in my own mind--and Maggie asked me--was how we worked. And I think it's important to get it across that there was no regular, formal pattern. For example, as you talk it all comes back to me how *Cromlich the Nature Boy*-I remember pencilling the layout myself the first time.

Le Blanc - You did the first page.

Eisner - I did the first page, which is what I normally did. As a rule, I would come up with a first page, and I would make out some rough layouts on the inside, because the compositions ad the planning of the book would be done in blue pencil and I would do the blue pencilling so that I wouldn't disturb Andre's drawing. It would pass back and forth. But I want to say one thing before Andre starts talking. A lot of the *Spirit* ideas--ideas for the *Spirit* story--you're going to ask me anyhow, I might as well save you the time--came from the newspaper events of the day. At the time there was a man sitting on 42nd Street and Broadway with long black hair--grey hair--his name was Moondog.

Cat - He's based on Moondog? Wow!

Eisner - He was the first visible hippy. He would write poetry. There was also a newspaper in New York at that time called *The Hobo News*. Now, *The Hobo News* was printed by a printer (those of you who are interested in this kind of trivia) *The Hobo News* was printed by a printer for the winos who were coming around 42nd Street. They would come in his print shop in the afternoon and he would give them something to make some money. The would run deliveries for him, because he did hanbills for the theatrical trade. And then he hit on the idea of the way to deal with these guys, so he's print up something and he'd give them a handful and they'd go out and sell it on the streetcorner and come back with the 50¢ in their hand, less the 25¢ they would take to by some wine. With the 25¢ they would buy a new batch of paper. What these men would do--what these winos would do, most of them--they would write poetry which he would then print, set in type and print in *The Hobo News*, and that is why they were called Hobos. They were called hobos in those days, and these derelicts would go out and they did some very wild poetry. I'm suprised some

of you who are collectors aren't into that, because I think some of that poetry was absolutely way out. Somebody told me--I don't know how true it is--but the song "Irene" which supposedly was written in prison--the words for it originally appeared in *The Hobo News*. I'm not sure about that. But certainly that's how the Comlich thing grew, and Moondog was sitting on 42nd and Broadway. Remember him? And I came in and I said, "Let's do a Nature Boy story," because there was a Nature Boy song that was built around Moondog. And so I wrote the dialogue, and I did this, and then Andre was in the shop at the time, and I said, "Andre, let's do this story." So I roughed out the story idea, and Andre took over. And then I came back and I inked some figures. We passed it back and forth. Abe Kenigson, was he still in the shop then? And he'd do the lettering.

Le Blanc - He was great. I remember.

Eisner - Fantastic. Wherever you are, Abe, we want to talk to you.

Cat - This is the usual Will Eisner panel request. If anyone ever runs into a man named Abe Kenigson or anyone who has a last name Kenigson, please have him call home.

Eisner - Please come home. We have chicken soup on the fire.

Cat - The man disappeared in 1952 and we're looking for him. I regularly every city I go to, I ask the telephone operator for anyone named Kenigson.

Eisner - That's right. I believe Jules Feiffer actually called...He had been active with the union and also he was doing square dances. And Jules Feiffer--remember he had a guitar in the shop? In the afternoon he played. It was a wonderful shop, wonderful. He played the guitar in the afternoon and we talked. Jules, I think, said that he called--that he knew somebody down in Washington in the FBI who tried to locate him--had the Federal Bureau try and locate him...all kinds of things.

Cat - All of this for a lowly letterer. This is how much these guys value their letterer...

Eisner - I was telling Maggie, we would discuss problems. I came in one day and I would say, "You know what I'd like to see if I could do, I'd like to get sound." You know a fellow like Glenn Miller looking for the sound...Glenn Miller always looking for the sound. I was looking for sound. Remember, we tried to get another dimension and we'd talk about it and I'd say, "Well couldn't we make it like a large 'Boom!'?" and Abe would say "I've got the solution, we got big balloons and little letters. When people are far away the letters are smaller. I'll try that." And he would come back and he would do it. Or I had this idea for a comic only in poetry, you know the entire one was in verse. And Abe said, "You can't do regular comic book lettering. Let me work up a lettering style." So he would develop the lettering. So we all worked together. That's why I said a lot of what you see sitting here is a very important part of the old Will Eisner. He was an arm--very much an arm. It's like the Disney Studio, where it was Disney all right but there was Iwerks and there were other guys and where they stopped and where they began is hard even for me.

Le Blanc - It's like batting a ball back and forth.

Cat - It's certainly different from what prevails at Marvel and DC. It's not as though Will wrote a script and Will Eisner edited it and then maybe someone pencilled it, and someone inked it. It was not like that, and from one week to the next who worked on the story and how much would change.

Le Blanc. - Free-form.

Cat - It was very free-form. The closest you could say now would be really more like some of the underground collaborations, where the people who work are friends and they design a story together. The Crusty Bunkers didn't write their own stories, though. And the thing is that Will would also slant a story to--well, he *could* set P'Gell in Paris, because Andre had been in Paris and Andre could draw it without reference material.

Eisner - One thing to keep in mind, however, there was--there *had* to be, mostly because the subscribers to the *Spirit* demanded there be a Will Eisner kind of personality and it was evidenced by the fact that when finally I tried to get Wally Wood to take over the strip--I had this terrible flak from the editors, who refused to allow it. because it was too obviously Wally Wood and not Will Eisner. Will Eisner persona had to be developed and had to be maintained.

Maggie - Was that also behind the dropping of the back-up strips?

Eisner - No, the dropping of the back-up strips (*Lady Luck* and *Mr. Mystic* and *Intellectual Amos*) came about because newsprint was getting more and more expensive and the newspapers just simply couldn't afford to pay for 16 pages. Some of them had the idea they wanted to run advertising, and we couldn't get national advertising into those 16 pages, so it became an economic--

Cat - During the year 1946, the cut in the *Spirit* section from a 16 page section with back-ups to an 8 page thing did not happen form one week to another. Every paper did it when it felt like it. At some point, enough papers had switched to the shorter format that they were no longer offered back-ups.

Maggie - What you're saying is that there were variant editions, not only in size of page but in size of issue?

Cat - That's right. Sometimes you'll find the same story as an 8-pager, as a 16-pager, depending on the newspaper it was printed in. Also some of them during that 1946 period would run advertisements on the back and there would be no *Clifford* or there would be no *Jonesy* which was running as the back-up then. And instead you'll find an ad for tiny, miniature typewriters only 60¢. It just depends on the newspaper that you buy.

Maggie - Was there any reverence in the shop for the characters you were working with?

Eisner - Would you remember anything about that Andre?

Le Blanc - Not especially.

Eisner - I was very irreverant, in fact. It was the clue.

Le Blanc - Because if you tended to get very stiff and very formal and try to make it like an icon that couldn't be touched, that couldn't be changed--I think the life of the *Spirit* was a fluidity, a constant growth. It was always developing. Don't you feel that [to Eisner]?

Eisner - Yeah, well, as far as I'm concerned, the *Spirit* was incidental to the whole idea.

Le Blanc - You read Chekov, you read Gogol, you went through Shakespeare, you went through Tolstoy. This guy was amazing, because he had such a terrific literary background!

Eisner - You noticed that, huh?

Le Blanc - Everybody said he was a genius and we used to--*He* was the guy we had the reverence for!

Cat - I just have to confirm this, Andre. I was once up at Will's house. One of my favorite *Spirit* stories is the one in which the *Spirit* meets Hitler and he quotes Machiavelli to Hitler, trying to explain to Hitler why he cant't take over America using Machiavelli quotes. And I was kind of standing around Will's house, and I tend to look at bookshelves and I saw this book and there was no writing on the spine, so I pulled it out. And, sure enough, it was a copy of *The Prince* by Machiavelli. And I said, "Oh, I bet this is the very copy that he got this quote from." And, you know, I'm such a fan--This is the *very*

copy that he got the quote--And I opened the book and sure enough after all these years it fell open to the page and there was marked in black pencil the passage that the *Spirit* quoted. So, yes, Will Eisner did read other things besides comics. I was impressed, I was really impressed, Will.

Eisner - Well thank you. No, but what I really think you ought to ask Andre..My memory seems to fail me when these questions come up..is about the ambience of the shop itself. I think Andre had a perspective that I didn't have. Because in my mind I can see the shop, but maybe Andre has a view of it that might be of interest.

Cat - Well, first of all, when you were working there, Jules was there too and Abe Kenigson and you and Will and who else was there?

Le Blanc - And Jerry Grandinetti and the shop was at Wall Street and we looked out the window and saw these moneybags. Right?

Eisner - That's right. There was a balcony, and now that you mention it, pigeons used to roost there.

Le Blanc - And some of the stories took place right in that area, because it lent itself so much to these stories just being on Wall Street, where all the money in the world was stored.

Eisner - That was 37 Wall Street.

Le Blanc - I had just come in from Europe and my wife and I, we'd spent a winter just trailing around like poor, lost students on a shoestring. And we'd spent every dime we had very quickly in France, and when we landed in New York, we were just about broke, and my wife said, "How are we going to get home?" because at the time we were living in Rio, so I said, "I'm going to call up a friend of mine, and I'm sure I'll get some work." So I called up Will from a payphone in the street and said, "Will, here I am." He said, "Where are you? Come around and talk!" Next thing I knew I was sitting at a table, drawing. Just like that.

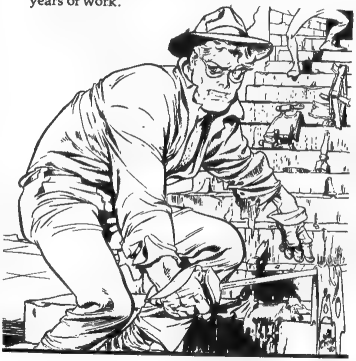
Eisner - It's always been that way between Andre and me. Andre is a very special friend. I want to say that publically. (I'll deny it privately [laughter].) But in public I want to say that Andre is a very dear and special friend and a very important and--As a matter of fact it's a delight for me--This is the first time, by the way, that Andre and I have been on a panel and said anything publicly. Everything we've ever said, we've said privately. So now we've had a chance to say all these things in public. I hope to continue doing stuff with Andre in the future. I think this is not the last you've heard of the Dynamic Duo. [Applause]

Cat - I just thought I should add, too, that Andre did have a life after Will Eisner. In fact, a rather prolific one. But it's very obscure to most comic fans. For sixteen years, you illustrated the Bible for David C. Cook Publishing. And it was a little supplement. In fact, it looked like a little *Spirit* section, except that it was the Bible. And Andre drew it and you colored it too, right?

Le Blanc - 2,000 pages.

Cat - Right. And Ben Oda lettered it, so it was a very beautiful comic. It was given away in Sunday Schools, I think. It was translated into many languages, and it's been collected in a hardback volume called *The Picture Bible*. There's also a black and white version which Andre actually redrew parts of to make it look better for black-and-white reproduction. So whether or not you're a Christian, and you're interested in Andre's work without Will (It's a much more realistic style that I don't think you're going to find at this comic-con, though) it's beautiful--200 pages of the Bible in comics.

Le Blanc - It takes the Bible from the very first day to the very last revelations. From *Genesis* in sequence. I worked on it the entire time for about, well nearly seven years, and then after that the commentaries went on, you know the Sunday School things. As you say, it's been about 14 years of work.



Maggie - Did you get a lot of criticism?

Le Blanc - I've had letters form all over the world, including religious communities, and nuns and priests. They said they liked it, so it must be all right. I've had tremendous response from friends of mine who are Jewish. It has become a universal thing. In 27 languages.

Eisner - He gave me a copy of it and I just want to add one thing: That anybody who worked in my shop had to have heart, and Andre has tons of heart...

Cat - Before you guys dissolve into mutual admiration, you should take it on the road; it's a wonderful act. I have a question. I think everyone here knows Will has done other things besides *The Spirit* and he doesn't seem to want to do the *Spirit* much now. But I think we should talk about some of your newer projects. I suppose everyone's seen *Contract With God* and

Life on Another Planet. Currently, Will is doing the so called *Big City Project*, this thing has no name. In fact, why don't you tell me what it is?

Eisner - I'm glad to answer that question. About a year and a half ago, two years ago--oh, a long time ago, I sketched out an idea for a portfolio, which lay in my shop, as ideas like that generally do. (I always put away ideas in the files) And I think I did it after I did the portfolio that Richard Pryor published, some of you may have seen that. And then Denis Kitchen called me and said, "I'd like to get into the portfolio field. Would you be interested in doing the first portfolio?" And I said, "As it so happens, I just happen to have a portfolio for you called 'The City'." A series of plates. And, as those of you know me, I never am really satisfied with doing what everybody else is doing, I'll have to figure out something new, and I did a thing, it had an overview of descriptive passage which was kind of blank verse. I'm not a poet, but when I attempt to write poety it was written in a kind of a blank verse, very much the way I write introductions to *The Spirit*. This is a series of six plates called *The City*, I had originally intended to do as etchings. Denis Kitchen published them in a very limited edition of about 1500 copies, half of which were sold throughout Europe, where they were very successful, apparently. And when I was in Europe a few years ago a publisher in Europe who had been buying those who runs a distributing company said, "Is this all you are going to do, or are you going to do more?" Well, I always think I want to do more, so I said yes, I am. And he said, "Well, whenever you're going to do something beyond this, let me know because I think a lot of people would be very interested." And we'd gotten talking about how I'm identified very much with the city, the city itself. On the plane on the way back I got the idea for a project I never thought any publisher would support, which would be to do a portrait of the city. And for me the city is New York City, but any big, major city like New York City. No one has ever done, I thought, a portrait the way the people in the city, who live in the city, see it and that is from the ground up. We all see the city, we're used to seeing it from the skyscrapers, and generally with a symphony in blue playing in the background as the camera pans in across the city and you see the tops. But no one ever sees the city the way *I* see it--the way all of us who live in it--with the sewers, the fire hydrants, the stoops, the grills, the grates, the fire escapes. *That's* what the city people who live in the city see all day, That's the city. So I proposed to the publisher a few months later with a dummy of how I intended to do it. A portrait of the city. And I told him, I said, "Would anybody ever be interested in this?" and he wrote back-cabled back, as a matter of fact--and he said, "How many pages do you think it will go?" And I said, "About a hundred and eigthty pages." And he cabled back,

"Do it." And suddenly there I was faced with 180 pages. So fortunately there's a *Spirit* magazine and fortunately Denis Kitchen will include anything in it that I, or that he, thinks is worthy of the reader of the *Spirit* and so I began doing it in segments, just as I did *Life on Another Planet*.

As of two weeks ago, I have completed about eighty pages. The current issue of the *Spirit* which you've just seen has the sounds. There was one page missing which Cat Yronwode swiped right out from under my nose; she wants to use it for her own magazine, she's a greedy girl. She's going to use it in a future issue of *Bop* which she's editing now. But this is street music. The next one will be called *A Sentinel*, which will be about fire hydrants and street lamps and all the sentinels that appear in the city. Last week when I got home, Monday when I got home from San Diego, I roughed out the next chapter. I did the dummy for the next chapter, which will be, called Windows. That'll bring us to about a hundred pages. I've got about another 20 pages to go and then hopefully it will be published as a total book. So that's what I'm working on now. It's been almost a year, a year and a half. It seems that the projects I'm on now take about a year, a year and a half, two years. Someday I want to do *Contract With God Stikes Back*.

Cat - When the first of the Big City things was published by Kitchen there was a color painting as part of it. Since then, none of them have had color paintings. When these are gathered into a book, is there going to be color?

Eisner - That's the idea. What they hope to have me do is a color painting to accompany each of the chapters, so to speak. I don't know how many there are; I think there are about ten, twelve chapters. There will be approximately ten or twelve paintings, so you may not hear from me for another two years.

Maggie - Do you still have a studio and who is in it and what do they do?

Eisner - I still have a studio, but most of the work, including the lettering and the backgrounds, are done by me. I even do theXeroxing. I have a studio in White Plains which is next door to my own house in which occasionally I teach at the school of Visual Arts, and I'm offering an internship to graduates. So I'll take in one or two students each year, both graduates, and they'll work in the shop and they'll work on that. The studio as it was way back--My studios generally grew, particularly the *Spirit*, grew out of the fact that I'd start something and it got too big that I needed help. That's really how it evolved. I did the *Spirit* for a number of years with nobody else doing anything. Occasionally, Bob Powell would do a window or a chair or a couple of cars or something like that. Gradually, it got so enormous. But in the case of *Life on Another Planet*, the first two chapters were work done on it by one of my students. Subsequently, I redrew it, because I didn't like it. *Life in The Big City*, everything in it I'm doing all by myself. Ao my Studio is essentially me and whoever I have in the shop.

Cat - I think I ought to add here, when he speaks of other projects he gets involved in: Will is doing too much. Besides all this other stuff, he's turning out books on *Robert's Rules of Order* and nutrition guides for calorie-counting dieters and none of these say "by Will Eisner" on them, but he's doing that stuff, too. And you don't see it--and I don't see it sometimes, either--but the Will Eisner completist might be interested to know that there is a bartender's guide that has a cover lettered by Will. Will goes, "I think a bartender's guide would be great if ther's little pictures of the kind of glasses that the drinks are served in, because there's never been a bartender's guide like that." "Now, let's get someone to do it." And then those people do it. Like I, for instance, was involved in a calorie-counter's guide. Will calls me up and asks, "Do you have any spare time. We need to have a book on calorie counting."

Eisner - The operative words are "No one has done it before." That's the operative word. And occasionally, as I've said, I have ideas and occasionally I tell a publisher, "Hey, there ought to be something like the *Roberts Rules*." No one has ever taken *Robert's Rules of Order* which really is basically sequential pictures, because: We're having this meeting here. If somebody raises his arm and wants to make a point of or-

der, that's a procedural thing; it can be described visually. An I was making a case, actually, with a publisher friend of mine about this when I was talking about sequential art. He said, "Yeah, you talk about sequential art, but it can't be done for everything." And I said, "Oh it can be done for a lot of things." "Like what?" says he. So I say, thinking very fast, "How about things like *Robert's Rules of Order*?" "Ah no," he said, "It can't be done." "I bet," he said. So I got back to the studio and noodled out three or four pages to show how it can be done, and two weeks later, he says, "Hey, would you do that? Would you publish that?" Anyway, it's going to be published; that one, I did all the illustrations myself, because I was sure it could be done and no one thought it could be--so Bantam Books, a small publisher in New York [laughter] that does paper backs is publishing it this fall. The final work is to the extent that when I get back from this thing I will ship out the mechanicals to be shot. In the case of the nutrition book, there was a nutritrion evaluation research project done by the Department of Agriculture a number of years ago, it's been published, and I looked at it and was talking with somebody and I said, "My God, this could be visualized." And I got one of my students, Bob Kizo--I designed--generally what I do is I always design the first three or four pages. I had him do a couple of the illustrations, each one of the foods--apples, bananas, oranges, are broken down into nutritional value. I called Cat and said, "Hey Cat, what are you doing?" And she said, "I'm counting birthdays, what are you doing?" So I said, "Hey," you know, "how about doing this because I've got this publisher who said he would like to get it done." That's how these projects get done. Somebody called me the other day and said, "Do you think a book on accounting could be done in visual and sequential art?" And I said, "Sure, I'll let you know in a minute." I picked up a phone and called Klaus Nordling and I said, "Hey Klaus, what are you doing?" And he said, "I'm chopping down a tree." I said, "How would you like to do the book?" And he said, "Like we used to?" And I said, "Sure." He said, "I'll do it." So I called the publisher and said, "Yeah." So probably next year there'll be a book on accounting by Klaus Nordling, which I got involved in.

Le Blanc - The classic one about how to avoid death and taxes. It's terrific, and it really works.

Q - What about the *Spirit* film? Is there a *Spirit* film?

Eisner - Yes, there is now a *Spirit* film in the works. I just signed an agreement a few months ago with Gary Kurtz, who I thing created a movie called *Star Wars*. I asked him what he had done before and he said a thing called *Star Wars*. It's going to be done, he tells me, in full animation with a substantial budget with the theatrical animation. He has the option. The story--I just came back from San Diego where I met with people involved. I've gone over the story, the general, rough early treatment, and I imagine it takes a couple of years to do, but at this point they are now making public announcements on it. I guess they gave Cat the first announcement, but I guess you got beat on that. So yes, the rumor is true. There will be a movie, hopefully, on the *Spirit*. [Applause] Save it until it comes out. The live-action film, by the way, that was to be done by Lynn Friedkin--that option expired last year and I did not renew it. I prefer to go with an animated film.

Q - Do you ever have trouble when doing a sketch capturing the feeling in the finished work later on?

Eisner - You want to answer that? [to Le Blanc]

Le Blanc - Everybody does.

Eisner - I was going to say "Yes, always."

Le Blanc - Absolutely.

Eisner - There's a rhythm kind of--uh--I don't want to say this in a mixed audience, but it's almost sexual it's so exciting. Cat's seen me work--

Cat - That sounds terrible! [Laughter]

Eisner - I'm sitting there drawing and I always ask Cat, "Would you please leave the room? It's kind of like a men's locker room here." There is a kind of rhythm. If you do it. There are artists who don't work with me. There have been a couple in our shop who just sit there and start with the top of the head and work down from the eyebrow to the nose and so forth and do it

mechanically. I don't believe in that. I believe it's kind of a ballet. But you lose it--you lose a percentage of it.

Q - Have you ever considered using very dark Xeroxes of your pencils?

Eisner - Yes, I've done that. It doesn't work because you also add when you ink--at least I do. And I know Andre does, unless he works with a brush the way I work with a brush. You add back into it at kind of--I think the secret is--and I think Andre, also, I shouldn't be speaking for you...

Le Blanc - We think alike.

Eisner - We do, we agree technically as well as we do philosophically. My pencils are quite light. That is, they're quite indefinite. The only reasonably tight pencils I've ever done was on *Contract With God*, and there I did it because I didn't know anybody would want that book, so I did the pencils very tight to show to prospective publishers. And so what I did as a result, I laid vellum over the whole system and inked over the vellum, in order to preserve it. But I work loosely with my pencils and draw with my brush.

Q - How do the comics of today compare with the comics of the early forties?

Eisner - It's like saying how do the girls of today compare to the girls of the early forties. They're bigger, they're better. Comics are better. I want you to answer that because you were there when I was there and I think you can answer it and we have the same visibility. I think it's important to say that they are, I think, they're better on the whole. To put it in one word, they're better. They're more mature and they're better. But the comics of the early forties had a freshness and à naivete, because they were all new and different. They were innovative. Innovative in a slightly different way than they are innovative today.

Le Blanc - It's like television. When television was really getting off the ground in the early fifties, it was more fresh and, as you know, without the technical competence we have today. But you had the liberty, the freedom to experiment with anything. So in the late thirties and early forties in comics everybody had a chance to try out anything that met his mind. You could try out anything, you could try out any story, there were no limits. As a matter of fact, Jerry Iger mentioned that he turned down *Superman*, remember?

Eisner - I did that. It was my fault.

Le Blanc - Turned down *Superman*. These two kids came in with a story about a man who flies through the air and Jerry said, "No way" and I think you said the same thing.

Eisner - Jerry turned down the idea. I was the guy who wrote the nice letter to these two guys that said, "You're not ready to come from Cleveland yet. Stay in the art school for another year, because you're not quite ready yet."

Le Blanc - And the drawing was pretty bad.

Eisner - Yeah, the drawing was--we couldn't take the drawing.

Le Blanc - The story was good. There was another story, one called *The Spy* and the artwork was awful.

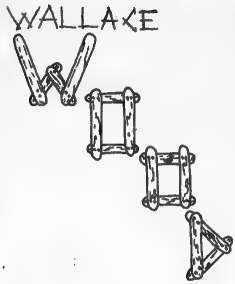
Eisner - Technologically, they are better [current comics]. They don't have the naivete of the forties. That's what you're looking for.

Q - What improvements would you like to see in comics today?

Eisner - I'd have to answer that by dividing comic books into two parts: There are the, what I call 10¢ comic books, that is the comic books like *X-Men* and *Spiderman* and so on, the small 7" x 10". They are a genre unto themselves. And then there are the more experimental sort of stuff like 10" comic *books*. Personally, I would like to see comic books or comics or sequential art move into areas of literature. I believe it's literature, and I'd like to see them deal with subject matter that is more sophisticated, more adult. That's where I think sequential art or comics should go.

Le Blanc - I believe that too because as a matter of fact I did a whole series for a Brazilian publisher; we did all the classics, very much like the old *Classics Illustrated* ones except these were on very good paper on good stock with good covers and the text was set in type, rather than lettered, so we were able to get in more of the original story, the real printed story. And these were very acceptable and very widely read.

Eisner - On behalf of my good friend and my recently discovered colleague, I want to thank you for coming and listening to us on this hot day. Thank you very much.



He was born in Menahga, Minnesota on June 6, 1927. Yet he became the greatest outer space artist ever to master the comic book page. He labored for years as a humorist and an artist for such magazines as *Mad*. Yet he was one of the greatest visual realists ever to work in any medium. He brought joy to millions. Yet he killed himself and died alone. He was an enigma wrapped in a mystery and both his life and his career have left many questions to be answered.

Wallace Wood virtually missed the entire Golden Age of Comics by beginning his career during the late 1940s. Certainly the heyday of comics was over by the time that he began as a letterer, placing someone else's words on someone else's visuals. By 1949 his artwork began to grace the pages of the books published by a number of comic book houses and he slowly began to develop that famous style that all afficiandos of the four-color page immediately visualize upon hearing his name. His first serious tenure was on the romance comics published by Fox for such titles as *My Love Memoirs* (formerly called *Woman Outlaws*) although these are not recognizably the work of Wood. He did freelance work for Ziff-Davis, Avon, Charlton, and EC. Wood also penned three spectacular weeks of *Spirit* Sunday sections which comprised the "Denny Colt in Outer Space" sequence.

Finally settling down with EC he became their main science-fiction draftsman and illustrated a great many of their best stories in titles such as *Weird Science*, *Weird Fantasy*, and *Weird Science-Fantasy*. Wood drew many of the Ray Bradbury adaptations done by EC--stories which are fondly remembered even now by those who discovered them then and are first being discovered by new generations of fine art lovers with every passing year. Simultaneous with his work for the SF titles he also began to do short humorous pieces for *Mad*, another of the EC comic books. This was to prove fortunate for when the EC line of comics collapsed after the introduction of the Comics Code some years later, Wood had a place to go. While at EC he continued to develop his own distinctive style although his earliest work shows very strong influences of other artists. In fact much of the earlier work looks like that of Steve Ditko, Alex Toth or Lou Fine.

By the end of 1951 Wood had drawn for virtually every publisher in the comic book business including such additional companies as Harwell, Standard, Magazine Enterprises, Master Publications, and the American Comics Group. Since he was also working for many of the houses he had worked for previously he was turning out a tremendous amount of artwork. While EC continued to hold his main efforts he did turn out two absolute masterpieces for other publishers. They were a science-fiction story, "An Earthman on Venus" and "The Mask of Fu Manchu" for Avon. The latter story is here reprinted in its entirety.

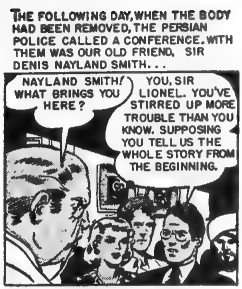
The remainder of the 1950s continued to see the bulk of Wood's work done for EC although Avon did continue to publish some of his material and he added Star Publications to his portfolio. EC, though, was clearly the publisher that Wood wished to work for.

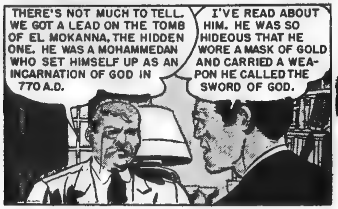
The last years of the decade witnessed the end of EC Comics and Wood turned his efforts, of necessity, to such publishers as Marvel and DC. It was the beginning of the modern era of comics and Wally Wood would never completely feel at home again.

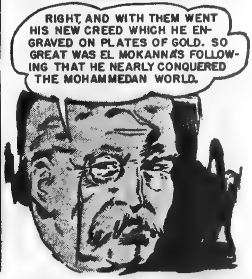
RULER OF THE GIGANTIC SECRET ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS THE SI-FAAN, GENIUS OF EVIL, AND SUPER-HUMAN ENEMY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION, THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU MANCHU ONCE AGAIN PITS HIS MASTER-MIND AGAINST SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH IN HIS NEVER-ENDING STRUGGLE TO RULE THE WORLD. ONLY HE DARED DEFY, THE DOCTOR AND EXPOSE WHAT LAY BEHIND THE DREAD MASK OF...
DR. FU MANCHU
PART 1
I WAS AWAKENED BY AN AWFUL SCREAM! GUN IN HAND, I DASHED OUT OF MY ROOM AS RIMA AND SIR LIONEL CAME OUT OF THEIRS....
WHAT'S WRONG, SHAN?
I DON'T KNOW. IT CAME FROM VAN BERG'S ROOM!
OHH! THE GREEN BOX IS IN THERE!

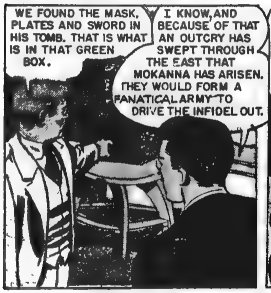
The Mask of Fu Manchu #1, copyright 1951 by Avon Publications

INSIDE VAN BERG'S ROOM A HORRIBLE SIGHT MET OUR EYES...
OHH, DAD!
SIR LIONEL, YOU'D BETTER TAKE RIMA OUT OF HERE. IT'S AWFUL! I'LL CALL THE POLICE.
POOR VAN BERG. HIS DEATH IS ON MY CONSCIENCE!


THE FOLLOWING DAY, WHEN THE BODY HAD BEEN REMOVED, THE PERSIAN POLICE CALLED A CONFERENCE. WITH THEM WAS OUR OLD FRIEND, SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH...
NAYLAND SMITH! WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
YOU, SIR LIONEL. YOU'VE STIRRED UP MORE TROUBLE THAN YOU KNOW. SUPPOSING YOU TELL US THE WHOLE STORY FROM THE BEGINNING.


THERE'S NOT MUCH TO TELL. WE GOT A LEAD ON THE TOMB OF EL MOKANNA, THE HIDDEN ONE. HE WAS A MOHAMMEDAN WHO SET HIMSELF UP AS AN INCARNATION OF GOD IN 770 A.D.
I'VE READ ABOUT HIM. HE WAS SO HIDEOUS THAT HE WORE A MASK OF GOLD AND CARRIED A WEAPON HE CALLED THE SWORD OF GOD.


RIGHT, AND WITH THEM WENT HIS NEW CREED WHICH HE ENGRAVED ON PLATES OF GOLD. SO GREAT WAS EL MOKANNA'S FOLLOWING THAT HE NEARLY CONQUERED THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD.


WE FOUND THE MASK, PLATES AND SWORD IN HIS TOMB. THAT IS WHAT IS IN THAT GREEN BOX.
I KNOW, AND BECAUSE OF THAT AN OUTCRY HAS SWEPT THROUGH THE EAST THAT MOKANNA HAS ARISEN. THEY WOULD FORM A FANATICAL ARMY TO DRIVE THE INFIDEL OUT.

THIS MOVEMENT WOULD ENDANGER THE GOVERNMENTS OF ANY EASTERN POWER. BEHIND IT IS A MONSTROUS LEADER. NONE OTHER THAN DOCTOR FU MANCHU!
WHAT!

YES. AND MARK MY WORDS, THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GET THE CONTENTS OF THAT BOX, BUT THIS TIME WE WILL BE PREPARED.
2

UNDER SMITH'S INSTRUCTIONS WE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT WE WERE LEAVING IN THE MORNING, AND THEN SAT DOWN TO WAIT DEVELOPMENTS... THAT NIGHT...
I'VE BEEN HERE THREE HOURS ALREADY. MAYBE THEY WON'T COME AFTER... SOMEONE'S AT THE WINDOW! A DWARF!
HE'S THE ONE WHO KILLED VAN BERG! NOW HE'LL GO FOR THE BOX!
GRABBING THE BOX, THE DWARF CARRIED IT OUT THE WINDOW! EVERYTHING WAS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN...
GOOD THING HE DIDN'T REALIZE THE BED CONTAINED A DUMMY. I'D BETTER GET TO THE WINDOW IN CASE SMITH NEEDS HELP!
GOOD LORD! IT ISN'T HUMAN! IT... IT'S FLYING!
THEN FROM ACROSS THE STREET CAME A SHOT FIRED BY A BLACK-ROBED FIGURE AND THE DWARF PLUNGED TO THE STREET...
IT'S SMITH. HE GOT HIM!
A MOMENT LATER, SMITH JOINED US...
IT WAS INCREDIBLE. HE SEEMED TO FLY THROUGH THE AIR.
IT WAS BY THOSE HOOKS THEY RAN A LINE TO OUR BUILDING FROM THE MOSQUE. I GOT TWO OTHERS!
AT LEAST VAN BERG'S DEATH HAS BEEN AVENGED...
I DASHED ONTO THE STREET, FOLLOWED BY SIR LIONEL...
THERE HE IS!... SIR LIONEL! THE BOX! IT'S EMPTY!
I KNOW. IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN. THAT'S WHY I FELT SO BAD ABOUT VAN BERG. HE DIED FOR NOTHING.
3

THEY USED THE MOSQUE AS THEIR HEADQUARTERS. THEY'VE FAILED TWICE NOW, BUT THE THIRD....
WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING, SMITH, THAT I GIVE UP THE RELICS TO FU MANCHU?
NO. I'M SUGGESTING THAT YOU AND YOUR PARTY LEAVE ISPAHAN IMMEDIATELY WITH ME. I WON'T VOUCH FOR YOUR LIVES OTHERWISE.
HERE COME THE POLICE!
TAKING NAYLAND SMITH'S ADVICE, WE LEFT AS SOON AS OUR BUSINESS WITH THE POLICE WAS OVER. THE NEXT AFTERNOON WE LANDED AT CAIRO AIRPORT WHERE WE WERE GREETED BY OUR OLD FRIEND, DR. PETRIE...
A FEW MOMENTS LATER PETRIE WAS DRIVING THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE EGYPTIAN CITY.
THIS LAST JOB OF YOURS, SIR LIONEL, HAS CERTAINLY STIRRED UP SOMETHING. THE WHOLE MOSLEM POPULATION HAS BEEN AROUSED BY AN OUTBURST OF FANATICISM OVER EL MOKANNA.
THIS IS SERIOUS.
SUDDENLY, AS WE TURNED INTO THE NATIVE QUARTER, IT HAPPENED...
THE CENTER OF THE WHOLE TROUBLE IS RIGHT HERE IN THIS CAR. IN THE SUITCASE UNDER SIR LIONEL'S FEET. HE... LOOK OUT, PETRIE!
OH, WE'VE HIT HIM!
WE'RE IN FOR IT NOW!
AS A CROWD GATHERED, WE CARRIED THE STILL FORM OF THE OLD MAN INTO A NEARBY CAFE.
PUT THE POOR DEVIL DOWN ON A BENCH SO THAT I CAN EXAMINE HIM.
SHAN, TALK TO THE CROWD. KEEP THEM OUT OF HERE!

IS THE MAN DEAD, PETRIE?
YES! HE'S BEEN DEAD OVER THREE HOURS. THERE'S SOMETHING AWFULLY PECULIAR GOING ON HERE!
IT'S ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GET THE RELICS! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT TO SIR LIONEL! FOLLOW ME!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, SMITH!
THE FOREIGN DEVILS LEAVE THEY KILL US AND THEN LEAVE!
SOMEHOW WE MANAGED TO REACH THE CAR. WE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME TO SEE SIR LIONEL SPRING INTO ACTION...
COMING, BARTON!
IT'S A FRAME-UP, SMITH! THESE BEGGARS ARE AFTER THE SUITCASE...!
THE BLIGHTERS! LET'S GIVE IT TO THEM!
DESTROY THE FOREIGN DEVILS!
GET BEHIND ME, RIMA! THESE BIRDS WILL STOP AT NOTHING!
THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED BUT FOR THE INTERVENTION OF A PAIR OF BRITISH-EGYPTIAN POLICEMEN...
LOOK! THE POLICE!
THANK THE LORD. IS THE CASE SAFE?
IT IS!
YOUR CAR, SIR? WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?
THAT REMAINS TO BE INVESTIGATED. MY NAME IS NAYLAND SMITH. HAVE YOU BEEN ADVISED?
YES SIR. TWO DAYS AGO... CARRY ON, SIR. WE'LL DEAL WITH ALL THIS.
THANK YOU. COME ON, EVERYONE. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

SAFE IN OUR ROOMS AT SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL WE DISCUSSED THE EXCITING EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS...
IT'S PREPOSTEROUS! I AM NOT PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE COULD HAVE A STOCK OF DEAD MEN WAITING ON THE ROAD FROM HELIOPOLIS
NEITHER AM I. IT'S THE MOST EXTRA-ORDINARY TRICK I HAVE EVER MET WITH, EVEN IN MY DEALINGS WITH DR. FU MANCHU!
TRUE, ONLY ME COULD DEVISE SUCH A THING, BUT ONLY YOU AND I, SMITH, COULD GO ONE BETTER. THE RELICS WEREN'T WITH ME AT ALL!
SIR LIONEL, THAT'S NOT FUNNY! YOU EXPOSED EVERYONE IN THIS GROUP TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEATH. I HAVE A SUGGESTION TO MAKE!
YES!
THERE'S A BOAT LEAVING PORT SAID TOMORROW FOR SOUTHAMPTON. I SUGGEST THAT RIMA SECURES A BERTH
WHY SHOULD I BE SENT HOME, SIR DENIS? FOR MONTHS I'VE BEEN LIVING IN REMOTE CAMPS HERE AND IN PERSIA, AND YOU SEE--I'M STILL ALIVE.
I KNOW, BUT AS LONG AS YOUR FATHER INSISTS ON PUTTING YOU INTO DANGER, THERE'S NO CERTAINTY THAT YOU WILL STAY THAT WAY.
SIR!
COME ON, SHAN. LET'S GO DOWNSTAIRS. THERE'S DANCING IN THE GARDENS. LET THESE TWO FIGHT IT OUT.
IN THE GARDENS BELOW WE STOOD WATCHING THE DANCERS WHEN HUMPHREYS, OUR PILOT, JOINED US...
HELLO, YOU TWO. DON'T TELL ME YOUR SITTING MUSIC LIKE THIS OUT? HOW ABOUT A DANCE WITH ME, MISS BARTON?
DO YOU MIND, SHAN?
NOT AT ALL. I'LL TAKE A TURN AROUND THE GARDEN.
AS I TURNED DOWN ONE OF THE PATHS I SAW SOMETHING THAT BROUGHT ME UP IN ABRUPT SURPRISE...
IT CAN'T BE! I MUST BE DREAMING! THAT'S FAH LO SUEE, FU MANCHU'S DAUGHTER! I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW HER!

WHAT CAN SHE BE DOING HERE? WHAT CAN SHE WANT?
I REACHED THE STREET IN TIME TO SEE HER RIDE OFF IN A LONG, LOW TWO SEATER.
CABBY, FOLLOW THAT CAR! DOUBLE FARE IF YOU KEEP IT IN SIGHT!
SOMEHOW WE KEPT HER IN SIGHT AS WE THREADED THROUGH NARROW, DESERTED STREETS. SHE FINALLY STOPPED DEEP IN THE NATIVE QUARTER.
PULL UP! SHE'S STOPPED! WHERE ARE WE ANYWAY?
THIS STREET LEADS TO THE MOSQUE OF MUAYYAD-BAB EZ ZUWELA.
STAY HERE! DON'T MOVE UNTIL I GET BACK! WHATEVER HAPPENS, STAY!
DASHING AFTER HER, I BEGAN TO GROPE MY WAY DOWN A DARK, UNEVENLY PAVED PASSAGE...
I'M A FOOL FOR DOING THIS. IT'S A TRAP AND YET I FOLLOW HER BLINDLY. I'D BETTER GO BACK FOR HELP.
I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO GO BACK. I WAS SUDDENLY OVERWHELMED WITH A SWEET, SICKENING ODOR...
I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE CAB BEFORE IT'S TOO... OHH! MIMOSA! FU MANCHU'S GAS...
DO NOT HARM HIM. TAKE HIM TO MY FATHER. HURRY!
AS YOU COMMAND, MISTRESS
THAT WAS ALL I REMEMBERED AS I SANK INTO DARK DEPTHS AND MY HEAD SWAM DIZZILY...
7.

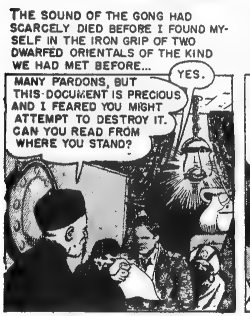
PART 2

WHEN CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNED I FOUND MYSELF IN A STRANGE ROOM THAT WAS PART LABORATORY. ENTERING THE DOOR WAS NONE OTHER THAN—DOCTOR FU MANCHU...
MR. GREVILLE, I TRUST THAT ANY SLIGHT HEADACHE WHICH YOU MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED ON AWAKENING HAS NOW DISAPPEARED. YOU SUCCUMBED TONIGHT TO A NEW DRUG OF MY OWN DISCOVERY.

IT WOULD BE USELESS TO CONTEMPLATE INJURY TO ME. IN THIS LABORATORY I HAVE THINGS THAT WOULD STOP YOU INSTANTLY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

ALL IN GOOD TIME. I HAVE PROMISED MY DAUGHTER, WHOM YOU KNOW AS FAH LO SUEE, THAT NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU. FOR SOME REASON YOU HAVE PLEASED HER. SHE HELPED TRAP YOU ONLY ON THE STRENGTH OF THAT PROMISE.

I REPEAT, WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?
THROUGH YOU I EXPECT TO GET THE BARGAINING POWER I NEED TO OBTAIN THE RELICS OF EL MOKANNA.


THE SOUND OF THE GONG HAD SCARCELY DIED BEFORE I FOUND MYSELF IN THE IRON GRIP OF TWO DWARFED ORIENTALS OF THE KIND WE HAD MET BEFORE...
YES.
MANY PARDONS, BUT THIS DOCUMENT IS PRECIOUS AND I FEARED YOU MIGHT ATTEMPT TO DESTROY IT. CAN YOU READ FROM WHERE YOU STAND?

WHAT I READ SHOCKED ME TO THE CORE! IT WAS A NOTE TO RIMA IN MY OWN HANDWRITING TELLING HER TO MEET ME ALONE!...
THIS IS AN AMAZING FORGERY, BUT SHE WILL NEVER BE FOOL ENOUGH TO COME!
FORGERY! MY DEAR MR. GREVILLE, YOU WROTE THAT YOURSELF WHILE DRUGGED. MY NEW ANESTHETIC HAS PROPERTIES APPROACHING PERFECTION.

SHE'LL KNOW IT'S A TRAP THE MOMENT SHE SEES I AM NOT THERE, YOU WON'T GET HER.
BUT YOU WILL BE THERE AND YOU'LL GO OPERATE. BRING HIM TO ME.
8.

A MOMENT LATER I FELT THE SHARP PRICK OF A NEEDLE AND A WARM EXHILIRATION SWEPT OVER ME...
I...UNDERSTAND...
THIS PREPARATION LEAVES NO MEMORY BEHIND IT, AND THE PATIENT REMAINS UNDER MY CONTROL THROUGH ITS WHOLE PHASE.
AS THE DOCTOR'S SERVANTS RELEASED ME I REALIZED THAT IT WAS A PLEASURE TO SERVE HIM. HOW COULD I HAVE EVER WANTED TO DESTROY A MAN LIKE THIS?..
NOW YOU WILL BE DRIVEN BACK TO THE HOTEL, MR. GREVILLE, WHERE THE NOTE WILL BE GIVEN TO MISS BARTON. YOU WILL WAIT FOR HER AT THE CAR.
OF COURSE! I AM GLAD TO BE OF HELP. TRUST ME, SHE WILL BE HERE.
THIRTY MINUTES LATER FOUND ME OUTSIDE THE SHEPHEARD HOTEL AS RIMA, NOTE IN HAND, HURRIED TOWARD ME...
SHAN! SHAN DARLING! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU HAVE TERRIFIED US ALL!
QUICK! GET IN. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT NOBODY SHALL SEE US.
SHE GOT IN AND WE MOVED OFF...
SHAN DEAR, WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN? SIR DENIS IS FRANTIC. HE'S NOTIFIED THE POLICE. WHOSE CAR IS THIS?
IT'S HIS CAR. WE ARE GOING TO HIM.
HIM! YOU'RE MAD! LET ME OUT OF THIS CAR! LET ME OUT!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DARLING...
I DO, SHAN! I DO. MAKE HIM STOP! ....HELP!
RIMA, DARLING, PLEASE. YOU WILL SPOIL EVERYTHING.
IN AND OUT OF THE DESERTED WINDING STREETS OUTSIDE CAIRO WE TURNED AND TWISTED UNTIL AT LAST WE REACHED OUR DESTINATION...
DON'T BE AFRAID, RIMA. DOCTOR FU MANCHU IS A GREAT MAN AND WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HELP HIM.
OH, SHAN! SHAN! WHAT HAS HE DONE TO YOU?

I HAVE RELATED WHAT REALLY HAPPENED THAT NIGHT IN CAIRO IN THE PROPER ORDER OF THOSE EVENTS--BUT IN THEIR ORDER AS I KNEW THEM AT THE TIME.
SHAN, DEAR, YOU MUST WAKE UP! TRULY, YOU MUST. I'M SORRY.
WH... WHAT HAPPENED?
IT WAS SO LOVELY SITTING HERE AND WATCHING THE RIVER, BUT I AM POSITIVELY SHIVERING. I'M GOING TO DRIVE YOU BACK NOW.
WHERE HAVE I BEEN? HOW CAN I EXPLAIN TO RIMA, LEAVING HER TO... TO SIT BY THE NILE MAKING LOVE TO FU MANCHU'S DAUGHTER. IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER!
GOODNIGHT, DEAR! REMEMBER ME TILL WE MEET AGAIN.
REMEMBER. I MUST REMEMBER.
MR. GREVILLE! I WAS NEVER MORE PLEASED TO SEE A MAN IN MY LIFE.
WHERE IS SIR DENIS AND MISS BARTON?
YOU LOOK THOROUGHLY BEAT. BETTER SIT DOWN. I'M HEWLETT FROM HEADQUARTERS. I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE FOR YOU FOR THREE HOURS.
BUT THE OTHERS. WHERE ARE THEY?
SIR DENIS, DR. PETRIE AND SIR LIONEL ARE WITH THE SEARCH PARTY. IT'S HARD TO HAVE TO TELL YOU, BUT IT'S FOR MISS BARTON WE ARE SEARCHING.
WHAT!! MISS BARTON! WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
10

ALL WE KNOW IS THAT AN EGYPTIAN CHAUFFEUR BROUGHT A NOTE TO ONE OF THE SERVANTS HERE AND HE GAVE IT TO MISS BARTON. SHE HASN'T BEEN SEEN OR HEARD OF SINCE.
THIS IS TERRIBLE. I MUST FIND SIR DENIS RIGHT AWAY.
THE NEXT MORNING... AND STILL NO WORD OF RIMA'S WHEREABOUTS.
OLD CHAP, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL! TAKE MY WORD FOR IT... WE'LL HAVE NEWS OF HER SHORTLY.
BUCK UP, YOU'RE SAYING THAT TO EASE MY MIND.
NO! I BELIEVE RIMA HAS BEEN TAKEN BY DR. FU MANCHU, TO FORCE SIR LIONEL TO GIVE UP THE RELICS.
OH, IF ONLY I COULD REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED AFTER I LEFT TO FOLLOW FAH LO SUEE. BUT I'M AN ABSOLUTE BLANK!
LET'S CHECK THE CONTENTS OF YOUR POCKETS... WE MAY GET A CLUE.
ALL RIGHT. ... SAY, WHAT'S THIS? I DIDN'T HAVE THAT BEFORE.
THE ENVELOPE CONTAINED A SMALL WHITE PELLET AND A NOTE WRITTEN IN THE UNMISTAKEABLE HAND OF FAH LO SUEE...
IT'S A NOTE FROM FAH LO SUEE AND THIS PILL.
WELL WHAT DOES IT SAY, MAN? READ IT!
IT SAID...
I do not want you to suffer because of what I have been compelled to do. You love Rima & she does not come back ... trust me. I am not jealous. Take the enclosed tablet as soon as possible. It is necessary. Believe me. Burn this letter.
IT ISN'T SIGNED, BUT SHE WROTE IT. I'D STAKE MY LIFE ON IT. I'D AS SOON TAKE THAT TABLET AS JUMP OUT THE WINDOW.
I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL, BUT KEEP IT. IT MAY HAVE ITS USES LATER. VERY REMARKABLE, INDEED!
11

TOO EXHAUSTED TO DO ANYTHING FURTHER, I TRIED TO GET AN HOUR'S SLEEP. IT SEEMED AS IF I HAD JUST DOZED OFF WHEN SMITH SHOOK ME AWAKE...

WAKE UP, OLD CHAP, THERE'S GOOD NEWS! WE'VE HAD WORD OF RIMA. SHE'S BEING HELD FOR RANSOM.

AT LEAST SHE'S ALIVE AND ALL RIGHT. THANK GOODNESS!

COME ON, THE MESSENGER IS IN BARTON'S ROOM. HE'S WAITING TO TALK WITH US.

WHAT! AN AGENT OF FU MANCHU, HERE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

A MOMENT LATER WE WERE FACE TO FACE WITH THE MAN WHO HAD COME TO NEGOTIATE WITH SIR LIONEL....

THIS IS... ER... MR. ADEN, A SOLICITOR FROM CAIRO.

BLASTED NONSENSE! HE'S ONE OF THE ROTTEN GANG! LET HIM STATE HIS CASE!

PLEASE. THE SITUATION IS DIFFICULT. I ACT FOR POWERFUL INTERESTS. I CANNOT AFFORD TO OFFEND.

THE WAY I UNDERSTAND IT, MISS BARTON WILL BE RETURNED IF SIR LIONEL GIVES UP CERTAIN PROPERTY.

THAT IS CORRECT. IF THE PROPERTY MENTIONED IS BROUGHT TO A SPECIFIED PLACE, MISS BARTON WILL BE THERE!

THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS BLACKMAIL! I OUGHT TO...

STOP! WE ARE UP AGAINST A STONE WALL. I SUGGEST WE COMPLY WITH MR. ADEN'S REQUEST.

YOU ARE BEING SENSIBLE, MR. SMITH. BEFORE I LEAVE I MUST SEE THE ITEMS UNDER DISCUSSION AND NOTIFY MY CLIENT ALL IS CORRECT.

THERE WAS NOTHING MORE WE COULD DO UNTIL WORD CAME FROM MR. ADEN. THINGS WERE AT A STANDSTILL UNTIL LATE THAT AFTERNOON...

SMITH! HAVE YOU ANY NEWS?

YES. I HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO TURN OVER THE RELICS TO THOSE WHO DEMAND THEM. THEY WILL TAKE THEM AND RETURN RIMA AT TWELVE TONIGHT IN THE KING'S CHAMBER OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

IF I HAD ANY SENSE I'D BREAK THIS CROOK'S OILY NECK!

BARTON, I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU. YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I THAT NOTHING ELSE COUNTS WHILE RIMA IS IN THE HANDS OF--MR. ADEN'S CLIENT.

WHAT! THIS IS STARK, RAVING LUNACY.
I DON'T FOLLOW, SMITH. IT'S UTTERLY FANTASTIC. WHY?
I'LL EXPLAIN. FU MANCHU'S AGENT WAS AUTHORIZED TO PROPOSE A MEETING PLACE NOT LESS THAN HALF A MILE FROM ANY DWELLING.
ALSO THERE WAS NOT TO BE MORE THAN TWO OF US AND NO MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE WITH RIMA. I ALSO MADE A FURTHER CONDITION. AFTER THE EXCHANGE THERE WILL BE A TEN MINUTE TRUCE.
I STILL DON'T GET IT!
DON'T YOU SEE. IF FU-MANCHU PLANS AN AMBUSH THIS WILL GIVE US A CHANCE. IN SPITE OF HIS EVILNESS THE DOCTOR HAS NEVER BROKEN HIS WORD.
WELL?
THERE IS NO CLAUSE IN THE AGREEMENT PROHIBITING OUR BEING COVERED BY AS MANY PERSONS AS WE WISH. THE POLICE WILL SURROUND THE PYRAMID!
THERE IS ONLY ONE ENTRANCE TO IT. EVEN IF THEY GET BY THE POLICE THEY CAN'T GET OUT WITHOUT BEING CAUGHT. WE'LL GET RIMA AND KEEP THE RELICS.
THERE'S ONLY ONE CATCH. FU MANCHU WILL NEVER GO FOR A DEAL LIKE THAT. HE'LL VETO THE WHOLE THING.
ON THE CONTRARY, HE ACCEPTED. I HEARD BY PHONE JUST BEFORE I CAME HERE. WE'LL ALL BE AT THE PYRAMID TONIGHT.
TEN MINUTES OUT WE'LL FOUND US CLOSE BY THE GREAT PYRAMID. SMITH QUESTIONED ONE OF THE DISGUISED SECRET SERVICE MEN THAT SURROUNDED IT.
ONLY THING ODD I'VE NOTICED, SIR, IS THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE A GATHERING OF DERVISHES IN THE VILLAGE.
QUEER BUSINESS, DERVISHES AT GIZEH. DON'T LIKE IT.
WELL, WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT IT NOW. IT'S TIME TO GO. COME ON, GREVILLE.
READY.
GOOD LUCK TO BOTH OF YOU.
13

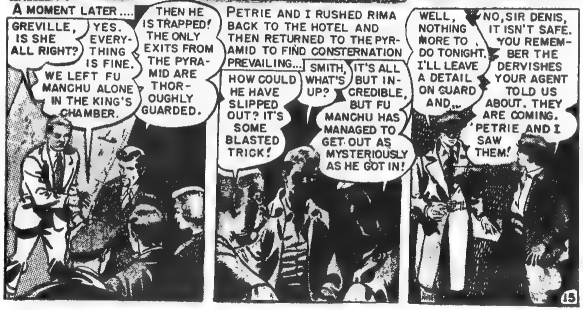
AS WE NEARED THE HUGE PILE ANOTHER MAN SLIPPED FROM THE SHADOWS...
HEWLETT! WHAT NEWS?
WE'VE GOT SIXTY MEN AROUND THE PLACE. NOT A SOUL HAS ENTERED SINCE THE GUIDES LEFT. ANYONE WHO'D GONE IN WOULD HAVE TO BE INVISIBLE.
HE'S BACKED OUT! SIR LIONEL WAS RIGHT! HE'S SPOTTED THE GORDON AND CALLED HIS MEN OFF.
WAIT AND SEE! COME ON, GREVILLE, WE'RE GOING INTO THE PYRAMID.
AT ONE MINUTE TO TWELVE WE STOOD AT THE BLACK ENTRANCE THAT LED TO THE INSIDE OF THE ANCIENT PILE...
HOW COULD ANYBODY BE IN HERE, SIR DENIS? THE POLICE HAVE SEEN NO ONE ENTER. DOCTOR FU HAS FAILED US.
I WOULD BELIEVE THAT IF I HAD NOT SPOKEN TO HIM ON THE PHONE TODAY. HE WILL BE HERE.
FROM NOW ON, YOU TAKE OVER, GREVILLE. YOU KNOW THESE PASSAGES LIKE A BOOK.
ALL RIGHT, BUT I HAVE A FEELING WE WON'T SEE RIMA AGAIN.
PROCEEDING DOWN THE DARK PASSAGE WE FINALLY REACHED THE GREAT HALL, THE MIGHTY CORRIDOR THAT LED TO THE KING'S CHAMBER. AS WE ENTERED...
DID YOU HEAR THAT? FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WHAT WAS IT?
A SIGNAL TO ADVISE SOMEONE WE ARE HERE. THE LORD KNOWS HOW THEY GOT IN, BUT I WAS RIGHT. WE ARE NOT ALONE!
AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE INEXPLICABLE KING'S CHAMBER, WE PAUSED...
WE ARE WALKING INTO A TRAP, SIR DENIS. IF THEY CAN GET IN WITHOUT BEING SEEN, THEY CAN GET OUT.
I KNOW, BUT I AM RELYING ON FU MANCHU'S WORD. IN ALL THE YEARS I HAVE FOUGHT HIM, HE NEVER BROKEN IT... LET'S GO IN.
WE ENTERED AS A STRANGE THING HAPPENED. A BRILLIANT LIGHT FLASHED ON TO REVEAL A MAN SEATED AT A TABLE... IT WAS DR. FU MANCHU!
WE MEET AGAIN, SIR DENNIS--A MEETING YOU DID NOT ANTICIPATE. YET YOU MIGHT HAVE DONE SO.
I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN!

PART 3

FOR A MOMENT NAYLAND SMITH AND THE INSIDIOUS DOCTOR STARED AT EACH OTHER COLDLY...THEN...

RIMA! DARLING! HAVE YOU BEEN LYING THERE, HIDING?
YES! I PROMISED. IT WAS MY PART OF THE BARGAIN.
I HAVE PERFORMED WHAT I PROMISED, SIR DENIS. IT IS NOW YOUR TURN...

NEAR THE EXIT IT HAPPENED AGAIN!
THE GONG AGAIN!
DON'T BE AFRAID, RIMA. IT'S ONLY A SIGNAL THAT WE ARE ON OUR WAY OUT.
OHH! I CAN'T BEAR MUCH MORE! PLEASE GET ME OUT, SHAN!--GET ME OUT...


A MOMENT LATER....
GREVILLE, IS SHE ALL RIGHT?
YES. EVERYTHING IS FINE.
WE LEFT FU MANCHU ALONE IN THE KING'S CHAMBER.
THEN HE IS TRAPPED! THE ONLY EXITS FROM THE PYRAMID ARE THOROUGHLY GUARDED.
PETRIE AND I RUSHED RIMA BACK TO THE HOTEL AND THEN RETURNED TO THE PYRAMID TO FIND CONSTERNATION PREVAILING...
HOW COULD HE HAVE SLIPPED OUT? IT'S SOME BLASTED TRICK!
SMITH, WHAT'S UP?
IT'S ALL INCREDIBLE, BUT FU MANCHU HAS MANAGED TO GET OUT AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS HE GOT IN!
WELL, NOTHING MORE TO DO TONIGHT. I'LL LEAVE A DETAIL ON GUARD AND...
NO, SIR DENIS, IT ISN'T SAFE. YOU REMEMBER THE DERVISHES YOUR AGENT TOLD US ABOUT. THEY ARE COMING. PETRIE AND I SAW THEM!
15

IT'S A RESCUE! THEY MEAN TO RUSH THE ENTRANCE! FU MANCHU IS HIDING INSIDE!
WE'LL SOON FIND OUT. HERE THEY COME!
THERE MUST BE FIFTY OF THEM. WHAT WILL WE DO?
NOTHING. WE HAVE SIXTY MEN STILL ON DUTY. WE CAN HANDLE THEM IF NECESSARY.
AT THAT MOMENT IT HAPPENED. A TALL MAJESTIC FIGURE WEARING THE RELICS OF THE ANCIENT PROPHET APPEARED HIGH ON THE SLOPE OF THE PYRAMID. IT WAS LIT BRILLIANTLY.
GOOD LORD! WHAT'S THAT?
NO WONDER HE WANTED THE RELICS SO BADLY AND SO QUICKLY. THIS MEETING WAS PLANNED FOR TONIGHT!
THEN, AS SUDDENLY AS IT APPEARED, THE APPARITION VANISHED...
IT'S GONE!
THIS IS BAD! THIS SPARK IS GOING TO LIGHT A BONFIRE! WORD OF THIS WILL SPREAD LIKE LIGHTNING AND THERE WILL BE A FULL-FLEDGED REVOLT!
FU MANCHU TRICKED US, SMITH! BUT, BY THE LORD HARRY, I'VE TRICKED HIM!
NOT ANOTHER WORD WOULD HE SAY. THE FOLLOWING DAY, RIMA WAS ABLE TO TELL US HER STORY.
NOW DON'T EXCITE YOURSELF, RIMA. YOU'VE HAD A BAD TIME.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR PETRIE. IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I GOT THAT NOTE FROM SHAN...
16

NOTE! IT WAS A FORGERY!
DON'T INTERRUPT, GREVILLE. THESE ARE THE FACTS. REMEMBER THAT THEY RELATE TO A PERIOD OF WHICH YOU REMEMBER NOTHING.
IT WAS TRUE. THE GREATER PART OF THE NIGHT WAS A TOTAL BLANK TO ME...
I MET YOU AT THE CAR AND YOU SIMPLY DRAGGED ME IN. I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAD. WE DROVE TO A HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CAIRO WHERE I WAS MET BY A TALL MAN DRESSED IN BLACK.
"IT WAS DOCTOR FU MANCHU! YOU, SHAN, FELL BACK ON THE CAR SEAT AS THOUGH YOU WERE--DEAD! THEN I FAINTED
TAKE HER QUICKLY, AND BRING HER INSIDE.
YES, MASTER.
"WHEN I CAME TO I FOUND MYSELF IN A MAGNIFICENT ROOM WATCHED OVER BY A GIANT NEGRESS..."
WHERE AM I?... WH... WHAT HAPPENED?
DO NOT WORRY, MISS. YOU WILL BE ALL RIGHT. HAVE NO FEAR.
"FOR THREE DAYS NO ONE CAME NEAR US AND THEN THAT EVENING THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED AND FU MANCHU ENTERED..."
KEEP AWAY FROM ME! KEEP AWAY!
PLEASE, MISS BARTON. I AM AFRAID YOUR NERVES HAVE GOTTEN THE BETTER OF YOU. DRINK THIS AND YOU WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
YOU SEE, MISS BARTON, YOU FEEL BETTER ALREADY. NOW LISTEN TO ME...
"I REMEMBER NOTHING MORE TILL I FOUND MYSELF AT HIS SIDE IN THE KING'S CHAMBER INSIDE THE GREAT PYRAMID."
REMEMBER, SHAN GREVILLE'S LIFE DEPENDS ON YOUR FOLLOWING MY ORDERS. NOW, TO YOUR PLACE. YOU WILL RISE WHEN I CLAP MY HANDS. GO!
17

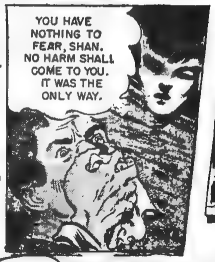
AND THAT IS ALL I CAN TELL YOU.
SOME OF WHAT YOU HAVE SAID SEEMS TO STRIKE A CHORD IN MY MEMORY, BUT I CAN'T HOLD ON TO IT. I CAN'T!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SHAN. ONE DAY IT WILL ALL COME BACK TO YOU.
DURING THE NEXT WEEK NAYLAND SMITH PAID AN URGENT VISIT TO DAMASCUS. IT WAS ON A SUNDAY NIGHT THAT PETRIE BURST IN WITH A MESSAGE...
WHAT'S UP, PETRIE? YOU LOOK RATHER DISTURBED.
I AM! SMITH SENT THIS TELEGRAM. DOCTOR FU MANCHU HAS BEEN IN DAMASCUS AND IS RETURNING TO CAIRO. HIS MISSION, BARTON, IS TO SEE YOU!
SMITH SAYS THERE'S A DUTCH STEAMER LEAVING PORT SAID TOMORROW FOR SOUTHAMPTON AND THAT YOU MUST ALL LEAVE ON HER. HE WILL MEET YOU AT THE SHIP.
IT MUST BE SERIOUS.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO.
THE NEXT DAY WE WERE ABOARD THE INDRAMATRA AT PORT SAID. SIR LIONEL, IN CUSTOMARY FASHION HAD TAKEN OVER THE BEST SUITE ON THE BOAT...
SIR DENIS, YOU'RE HERE AT LAST. I DIDN'T THINK WE'D SEE YOU.
QUICK! TAKE ME TO THE PURSER'S OFFICE!
IT'S AN OUTRAGE! THIS TRAVELING MOUNTEBANK HAS LITERALLY THROWN ME OUT OF THE CABIN I RESERVED IN CAIRO...
YOU WILL PARDON ME, BUT I HAVE A MATTER OF THE GREATEST URGENCY TO TAKE UP WITH THE PURSER.
AS A BRITISH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TRAVELING OFFICIALLY I AM AFFORDED CERTAIN FACILITIES AND I WISH TO STATE...
MR. KENNINGTON... PLEASE...
WELL, SIR, SINCE YOU ARE A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, YOU WILL GO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO ASSIST ME. IT IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE THAT I HAVE TWO MINUTES WITH THE PURSER!
MAY I ASK YOU, MR. KENNINGTON, TO ALLOW ME TO TALK TO THIS GENTLEMAN. HIS BUSINESS SEEMS IMPORTANT.
IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! BY HEAVENS, SIR, ROTTERDAM SHALL HEAR OF THIS!
18

A MOMENT LATER, SMITH AND THE PURSER WERE LOOKING OVER THE PASSENGER LIST. WHILE OUTSIDE...
SIR LIONEL BARTON IS THE PERSON'S NAME. WHO THE DEVIL, MAY I ASK, IS SIR LIONEL BARTON?
I AM SIR LIONEL BARTON. DOES ANYBODY WANT ME?
THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT OUR CABINS... BUT... IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
IT JOLLY WELL BETTER BE GOOD DAY, SIR!
A FEW MINUTES LATER SMITH WAS THROUGH AND WE HELD A CONFERENCE IN SIR LIONEL'S CABIN...
SIR LIONEL, I KNOW NOW WHAT YOU MEANT WHEN YOU SAID YOU TRICKED FU MANCHU.
YOU DO?
YES. THE RELICS YOU GAVE DR. FU MANCHU WERE REPLICAS YOU HAD MADE IN ISPAHAN. YOU STILL POSSESS THE REAL ONES!
SO, WHAT OF IT? I MADE NO BARGAIN TO DELIVER THE REAL THING. BESIDES, WHAT FU MANCHU DID WAS PLAIN BLACKMAIL!
ALL RIGHT, LET IT GO. BUT DR. FU MEANS TO GET THE REAL ONES!
WELL, HE WON'T. THE SHIP SAILS IN FIFTEEN MINUTES!
SMITH, SURE THE BOAT WAS SAFE. LEFT, AND THE BOAT SAILED. SOON AFTER...
THE BEST PLACE TO HIDE ANYTHING IS WHERE ALL CAN SEE IT... AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO, GREVILLE.
MOMENTS LATER...
THIS UMBRELLA WILL BE THE SWORD AND THAT BOOK THE PLATES. THE MASK AN EMPTY BOX.
BUT WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE REAL ONES?
18

PUT THE PLATES IN YOUR OVERCOAT POCKET. THE SWORD I'LL PUT IN YOUR GOLF BAG AND THE MASK IN MY CIGAR BOX. THE FAKES WE'LL GIVE TO THE PURSER TO LOCK UP.
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT MAKING A MISTAKE, SIR LIONEL.
A FEW MINUTES LATER WE WERE IN THE PURSER'S OFFICE WITH OUR FAKE PACKAGES. MR. KENNINGTON WAS STILL COMPLAINING...
I DEMAND SATISFACTION... ER...
I WANT THESE PACKAGES LOCKED UP. THEY ARE EXTREMELY VALUABLE.
VERY WELL, SIR LIONEL. I'LL PUT THEM IN IMMEDIATELY... EXCUSE ME, MR. KENNINGTON.
NOTHING FURTHER OCCURRED UNTIL TWO A.M. WHEN I GOT AN URGENT WIRE FROM SMITH.. SOMETHING WILL BE ATTEMPTED TONIGHT. KEEP SHARP LOOKOUT. NO M.P. NAMED KENNINGTON IN PARLIAMENT. ADVISE CAPTAIN AT ONCE. SMITH.
I WAS ON MY WAY TO SEE THE CAPTAIN WHEN SUDDENLY THE BOAT'S ENGINES STOPPED. OVERHEAD A PLANE APPEARED...
THAT'S FUNNY. THE ENGINES HAVE STOPPED. AND THAT PLANE— IT'S CIRCLING OVERHEAD.
SWIFTLY THE PLANE LANDED AND AS I WATCHED I HEARD A SPLASH ON THE SIDE OF THE SHIP...
WHAT'S GOING ON? SOMETHING WRONG?
I DON'T KNOW. A PLANE LANDED ON THE WATER AND SOMEONE HAS GONE OVERBOARD!
LOOK! IT'S A MAN SWIMMING TO THE PLANE!
HE'S TOWING WHAT LOOKS LIKE A BIG RUBBER BALL BEHIND HIM. VERY ODD!
SIR LIONEL!
I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU! I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE SUFFERED A HEAVY LOSS. THE OBJECTS YOU GAVE THE PURSER HAVE BEEN STOLEN FROM HIS SAFE.
AND THE MAN THAT GOT THEM IS ESCAPING TO THAT PLANE THIS VERY MINUTE!
20.

PART 4
IT WAS THAT KENNINGTON. I KNEW HE WAS A FRAUD.
WELL, IF THE PACKAGES ARE GONE, THEY'RE GONE. NO USE CRYING ABOUT IT.
IN ALL MY YEARS AT SEA I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THIS. IT...IT'S A NEW KIND OF PIRACY!
HE MUST HAVE HAD THE STUFF IN THAT RUBBER BALL AND FLOATED IT TO THE PLANE.
PROBABLY, NO USE WORRYING NOW. LET'S GET SOME REST.
THERE WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO TO STOP THE CULPRIT AND, IF THE TRUTH BE KNOWN, LITTLE WE WANTED THEM TO DO. AS SOON AS WE COULD, WE WENT TO THE PURSER'S OFFICE.....
WHEN WE WERE ALONE IN SIR LIONEL'S CABIN....
THEY FELL FOR IT! WE'VE BEATEN THEM GREVILLE, WE'VE BEATEN THEM!
I'LL BELIEVE THAT WHEN THEY ARE IN THE MUSEUM IN LONDON!
A WEEK LATER WE WERE IN LONDON AND SAFE IN SIR LIONEL'S HOUSE IN BRUTON STREET...
LOOK AT THEM! BEAUTIES! WHEN THE EXPERTS COME TOMORROW I'LL OPEN THEIR EYES! THE APPOINTMENT IS FOR ELEVEN, SHAN.
I KNOW. I'VE MADE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS.
I'M GLAD IT'S ALL OVER, NOW SHAN AND I CAN BE MARRIED AS WE PLANNED.
I'VE GOT THAT ALL ARRANGED TOO! IT'LL BE THE BIGGEST WEDDING LONDON HAS SEEN IN YEARS!
I'VE EVEN BETTER NEWS. I HAD A TELEGRAM FROM SMITH. THE MOKANNA MOVEMENT HAS DIED AS SUDDENLY AS IT BEGAN. WE'VE BEATEN THEM ALL RIGHT.
MAYBE WE HAVE THIS TIME.
FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS I LIVED IN A WHIRL AS PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING AND THE EXHIBITION WENT ON...THEN ONE NIGHT AS I RETURNED HOME LATE IT HAPPENED...
I'D BETTER GET TO BED. THE EXPERTS WILL BE HERE IN THE MORNING AND I'VE GOT TO BE ON MY TOES...WHAT'S THAT?....
21

AS I CLIMBED OVER THE LOW FENCE, A PARALYZING GRIP SEIZED MY LEGS AND MY ARMS WERE HELD IN A GRIP OF IRON. A PAD WAS PRESSED OVER MY MOUTH AND NOSE. FROM FAR OFF CAME A VOICE...



HEY! WHAT'S YOUR GAME, EH?
HUH! OH, CONSTABLE... I...I ER LIVE NEXT DOOR. I THOUGHT I HEARD A SCUFFLE IN THE HOUSE. AND WENT TO INVESTIGATE.

AT THE HOUSE I MADE MY WAY TO THE ROOM WHERE THE RELICS WERE AND SAT DOWN BEFORE THEM. SUDDENLY I WAS VERY SLEEPY...
WHAT COULD IT HAVE BEEN? IS MY BRAIN SLIGHTLY OUT OF GEAR? I-- I'LL THINK... ABOUT IT LATER...
FROM THAT MOMENT ON I SEEMED TO GO BACK-WARDS IN TIME AND THE MEMORY OF WHAT HAP-PENED IN CAIRO SEEMED TO COME ALIVE AGAIN...
SHE...TRICKED ME... IT'S DOCTOR FU MANCHU...
THEN I SEEMED TO RELIVE EVERY MOMENT OF THAT NIGHT THAT RIMA HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED AND I KNEW WHAT HAD OCCURED...
THEN I WAS IN THE MUSEUM ROOM AT BRUTON STREET AGAIN HELD BY FAH LO SUEE...
OH, SHAN, SHAN. I HAVE GIVEN YOU BACK THE MEMORY OF FORGOTTEN HOURS. THIS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU, BUT YOU WILL HATE ME AGAIN.
I COULD NEVER HATE YOU.
I HAVE TRICKED YOU MANY TIMES, FOR, ALTHOUGH I LOVE YOU, SHAN, YOU ARE NOT REALLY CLEVER.
CLEVERER MEN THAN I WOULD GIVE ALL FOR YOUR KISSES.
NOW I AM GOING, DEAR. THIS TIME FOR GOOD. GOODBYE, MY LOVE.
NO...NO...STAY WITH ME.
23

THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I FOUND MYSELF IN BED! HAD I BEEN DREAMING....?
NINE O'CLOCK, SIR. ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR TEA?
ER..WHAT... BETTS!...YES, PLEASE DO.
LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER I WAS WELCOMING THE GROUP OF EXPERTS WHO HAD COME TO EXAMINE THE RELICS...
I AM SORRY SIR LIONEL COULD NOT BE HERE!
MR. GREVILLE, COULD WE SEE THE PIECES NOW!
A MOMENT LATER, THEY WERE AVIDLY EXAMINING THE GOLDEN RELICS....
EXTRAORDINARY! REMARKABLE PIECES.
DR. CALTON! LOOK AT THIS!
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
MR. GREVILLE WERE YOU PRESENT WHEN THESE PIECES WERE REMOVED FROM THE TOMB?
WHY CERTAINLY. WHAT'S UP?
THESE PIECES ARE NOT GENUINE. THEY ARE BUT RECENTLY MADE!
WHAT! LET ME SEE THAT!
I HOPE FOR YOUR REPUTATION'S SAKE THAT THIS IS NOT A HOAX!
PLEASE, DR. STENTER! MR. GREVILLE'S REPUTATION IS BEYOND REPROACH.
THESE ARE DUPLICATES WE HAD PREPARED IN ISPAHAN. PLEASE REMAIN SILENT UNTIL THIS MYSTERY IS CLEARED UP.
OF COURSE. YOUR WISHES WILL BE RESPECTED. I AM SORRY.
I BELIEVE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT THE TOMB OF THE REAL RELICS WILL PROVE OUR GOOD FAITH.
I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU OR SIR LIONEL COULD EVEN THINK OF TRYING SUCH A HOAX.

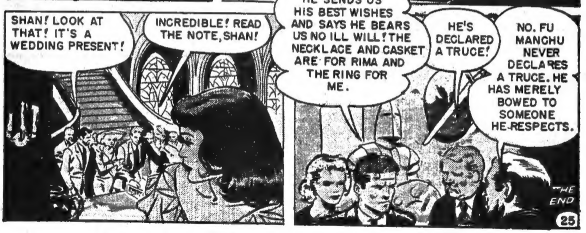
THE PHOTOGRAPHS CONVINCED THEM AND THEY LEFT. I WAS STUNNED. AT LAST I KNEW WHAT FAH LO SUEE HAD MEANT WHEN SHE SAID "YOU WILL LIVE TO HATE ME." AS I STOOD STARING AT THE FALSE RELICS BETTS ANNOUNCED NAYLAND SMITH AND DR. PETRIE...

A MORE WELCOME SIGHT I COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED...
SIR DENIS! DR. PETRIE! THE REAL PLATES ARE GONE! FU MANCHU HAS GOTTEN THEM THROUGH ME!
WHAT!

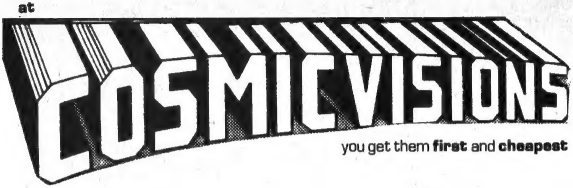
I TOLD THEM ALL THAT I REMEMBERED AND TOGETHER WE PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER..
FAH LO SUEE BROUGHT BACK YOUR MEMORY, BUT BEFORE SHE DID SHE MADE YOU CHANGE THE RELICS. THANK GOODNESS IT IS TOO LATE TO DO DAMAGE WITH THEM.
YOU'RE LUCKY, GREVILLE. HER LOVE FOR YOU MADE HER CLEAR YOUR BRAIN. YOU'RE FREE OF FU MANCHU'S INFLUENCE FOR GOOD.

WE BROKE THE NEWS TO SIR LIONEL WHO TOOK IT BETTER THAN WE HAD EXPECTED. NO MORE WAS HEARD FROM FU MANCHU UNTIL MY WEDDING TO RIMA...
YOU HAD A VISITOR, MR. GREVILLE. A TALL, VERY DISTINGUISHED MAN; CHINESE, I BELIEVE. HE LEFT A BOX FOR YOU. IT'S UPSTAIRS, SIR.

DO YOU THINK IT'S A TRICK, SIR DENIS. SHOULD I OPEN IT?
YES. DOCTOR FU MANCHU HAS NOTHING TO GAIN NOW. HE ISN'T THE KIND TO STOOP TO REVENGE.


SHAN! LOOK AT THAT! IT'S A WEDDING PRESENT!
INCREDIBLE! READ THE NOTE, SHAN!
HE SENDS US HIS BEST WISHES AND SAYS HE BEARS US NO ILL WILL! THE NECKLACE AND GASKET ARE FOR RIMA AND THE RING FOR ME.
HE'S DECLARED A TRUCE!
NO. FU MANCHU NEVER DECLARES A TRUCE. HE HAS MERELY BOWED TO SOMEONE HE RESPECTS.
THE END
25

at



you get them **first** and **cheapest**

early
bird
service

We will always have your books ready for you within 96 hours of their shipping date*[*almost a full week before other stores*). **OR** you will receive a **25# discount** on your next purchase!

Individual titles do not count, and, of course, publisher delays are exempt.

reserve
service

You will receive a **10# discount** on all comics on our monthly reserve service--plus you will never miss getting a mint copy!

discount
days

Three days out of ever month will be special discount days. These will **not** be announced in advance but will be posted on the door on that special day. **EVERYTHING IN THE STORE WILL BE 20# OFF ON THOSE DAYS!**

comics
give-away

With every purchase [minimum:$5.00] you will receive a free coupon. When you have collected ten coupons you may select any regular comic free of charge, with our compliments. Sorry, one coupon per day per customer.

COMICS, DR. WHO, SF PAPERBACKS, FANTASY & HISTORICAL GAMES

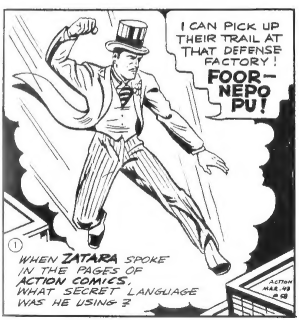
1809 Gulf to Bay, Clearwater, Florida
Hours: Tuesday - Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Friday 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 12:00 noon - 7:00 p.m.

1518 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, Florida
Hours: Monday - Friday 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 12:00 noon - 7:00 p.m.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMIC BOOKS AND COMIC STRIPS OF THE 30's, 40's, 50's

GOLDEN AGE PICTO-QUIZ #1

BY SAM CONNERY



① WHEN **ZATARA** SPOKE IN THE PAGES OF **ACTION COMICS**, WHAT SECRET LANGUAGE WAS HE USING?

NOVEMBER 1939--THE PREMIERE OF THE **HUMAN TORCH** REVEALS THAT IT TAKES ② TO MAKE THE TORCH BURST INTO FLAME, AND ONLY ① CAN PUT IT OUT!

SHAPELY **BRENDA BANKS**, DRESSED ALL IN GREEN AS ④ USED JUDO TO QUELL VILLAINS IN **SMASH** COMICS

GREASEMONKEY GRIFFIN ENLIVENED ③ COMICS WITH HIS NUMBSKULL TRICKS

REMEMBER THIS SIGNATURE? **Alfred ANDRIOLA** YEARS BEFORE **KERRY DRAKE**, HE DREW THAT SAGACIOUS ORIENTAL. ⑦

FROM A SUNDAY STRIP - NOV 23, 1930

⑥ NAME 5 OF THE KATZENJAMMER FOLKS

RESPLENDENT IN RED, WHITE AND BLUE, ⑤ PILOTED HIS FLYING WING IN **BIG SHOT** COMICS

FROM "ALL-AMERICAN COMICS" DEC. '47

⑨ WHO WAS THE ORIGINAL **GREEN LANTREN**'S EVER-PRESENT PAL FROM BROOKLYN?

Answers here!

1 PUBLISH - SPELLED BACKWARDS
2 OXYGEN ---- 8 NITROGEN
3 LAST LOCK 5 MORE COMICS
4 MAMA, INSPECTOR, CAPTAIN,
6 HANS SANZ, ROLLO, LENA,
MISS TWIDDLE 7 SHAMUS
CHAN 8 SKYMAN 9 DOLBY

THRILL! AS SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH FOILS FU MANCHU'S PLOT TO STEAL THE MASK OF "EL MOKANNA" AND SACRED SWORD THAT WOULD UNITE A FANATIC HORDE IN REVOLT!
FOLLOW DR. FU MANCHU IN HIS NEFARIOUS SCHEME TO TRADE LOVELY RIMA BARTON FOR THE SACRED RELICS!
MEET ENCHANTING FAH LO SEE, FU MANCHU'S DAUGHTER, WHOSE KISS ENSLAVES RIMA'S FIANCÉ, SHAN GREVILLE!
SEE DENIS NAYLAND SMITH'S ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE GOLDEN MASK TO ENGLAND, AND FU MANCHU'S TRY AT PRESENT-DAY PIRACY!